



MANSION NOTES

CENTRE FURNACE MANSION

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 46, Number 3

Summer 2024

Herstory: Early Centre County Pioneers

By Jackie R. Esposito

The Centre County Historical Society is pleased to introduce a new series of articles, entitled Herstory, by Jackie R. Esposito, CCHS vice president and chair of our Collections Management Committee. In future issues, Jackie will alternate Herstory with her current column, From the Archives, although both of them appear in this issue.

Women's archives and collections of women's records often reflect larger cultural and societal developments. In many cases, women's reflections of their role and participation are embedded in other types of records, such as letters, diaries, journals, and daily financial transactions, especially around the home. This series of articles will feature outstanding women who shaped the Centre County community and the University through the spectrum of themes related to its female pioneers. Themes such as local history, academic status, athletic performance, community engagement, and innovation will be addressed over the coming months.

The first group of pioneering women we meet are truly the earliest local Centre County influencers.



Frances "Fannie" Washburn Atherton with students in the President's House library.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State University Archives

Mary Irvin Thompson

May 3, 1812 - Aug. 22, 1890

The eighth of 10 children and younger sister to James Irvin, Mary, an earnest student herself, married Moses Thompson (iron-master) on January 8, 1838. She moved into the Centre Furnace Mansion in 1842. Between 1839 and 1854, Moses and Mary had eight children (six lived to adulthood). A gracious hostess, primary interior decorator of Centre Furnace Mansion and steadfast proponent of education, Mary was well-known and respected in the local community. Her daughter Sarah married Dr. Theodore Christ (first State College mayor); Elizabeth "Lizzie" married John Hamilton (Pennsylvania State College

Treasurer); John, a Lemont banker, married Elizabeth Boal and is identified as the student standing next to Abraham Lincoln in the Old Main Frescoes; William married Anna Elliot and was the last Thompson to live in the Centre Furnace Mansion; James married Jane Shaw and they ran the family farm across College Avenue from the Mansion. Mary Irvin Thompson died on August 22, 1890, having participated in the donation of the original 200 acres for the Farmers' High School (Penn State) and the development of the relationship between the Furnace community and the school's faculty and students as well. She also welcomed many state, national, and international dignitaries to the Mansion.

Frances "Fannie" Washburn Atherton

May 28, 1836 - July 8, 1913

Frances was the wife of Penn State's longest serving President, George Washington Atherton (1882-1906). Fannie was born near Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1836. She began her teaching career at 17 at the Bridgewater (Mass.) Normal School. She met George while he was attending Yale University in New Haven, Conn., and they married on Christmas Day 1863. Fannie arrived in State College in 1882 with six children (Charles, Franklin, Harriet, Helen, Mary, and Anne). She began her tenure as First Lady by focusing on improving and growing the mission of the Pennsylvania State College alongside her husband.

Fannie undertook educating her children as well as other children of faculty members, converting the President's House library into a classroom. With 35 faculty wives, she founded the State College Women's Club in 1894 to find a way to improve the intellectual lives of State College women. Fannie was also instrumental in the design and creation of the Ladies Cottage, built in 1890. So, it is quite natural that the Schreyer Honors College residence hall is named in her honor as a symbol of excellence, service, and integrity. A model of propriety and dignity, Fannie's Sunday teas were a coveted invitation. Many on campus remembered her as a driving force and presence.



Mary Irvin Thompson
Oil painting of Mary Irvin Thompson by artist Jean Grimm based on a historic photo.
CCHS 1986.22

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About the Centre County Historical Society

**Centre County Historical Society
Centre Furnace Mansion
1001 East College Avenue
State College, PA 16801, (814) 234-4779**

CCHS Office Hours: MON-FRI, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Research at the Centre Furnace Mansion:
Special arrangements for on-site research may be made by email or calling the office. For additional information, staff may be reached by calling 814-234-4779 or by e-mailing info@centrecounty-history.org.

Archives: Spring hours Thursdays and Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and by appointment during regular office hours.

Centre Furnace Mansion Tours:
Tours are available by appointment at the Centre Furnace Mansion on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.. Please call us at 814-234-4779 or schedule your tour online at CentreHistory.org/visit-us/visit.

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The Centre County Historical Society (CCHS) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, under Section 501(c)(3) of the I.R.S. Code. Donations are tax deductible. Official registration and financial information about CCHS may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Founded in 1904, the Centre County Historical Society, the County's official historical society, is a non-profit educational organization that promotes appreciation and research of Centre County's historic and natural resources through its properties, collections, programs, publications, and advocacy.

History is an interpretive art, based on available evidence. Accordingly, the interpretations are, at times, controversial and contested. The Centre County Historical Society strongly supports freedom of speech and the First Amendment rights of our speakers, authors, and writers. The Society may not necessarily support the views, conclusions, and opinions expressed, yet believes they merit entry into the marketplace of ideas and the scrutiny it affords.

A community and volunteer-based organization, the Society is headquartered in the Centre Furnace Mansion, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This site includes the restored and furnished ironmaster's home, furnace stack, and landscaped grounds and gardens. Centre Furnace was home to the earliest 18th century industry: charcoal iron making. In the 19th century Centre Furnace played an important role in the beginnings of Penn State University. The Society also owns and operates the nearby Boegersburg one-room school.

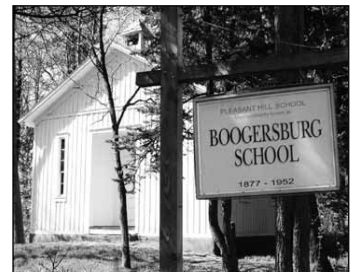
The Centre County Historical Society depends on financial contributions that help support our free public programs and educational opportunities for children, and provide necessary funds for the maintenance and operation of the Society's facilities and collections. Your membership and generosity are sincerely appreciated. Donations may be made by visiting CentreHistory.org and clicking on "MEMBERSHIP" or by simply sending in the form on the back of this newsletter.

The Society also may be supported by contributing to the Centre County Historical Society Endowment Fund, managed by Centre Foundation at CentreFoundation.org.

Mansion Notes is published as a benefit of membership in the Centre County Historical Society and is made possible through the G. Harold Keatley Fund.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We have much to be grateful for since our last *Mansion Notes* in April. This spring CCHS had two record-breaking fund-raisers – Centre Gives and the Plant Celebration. We are beyond grateful to all who assisted with and donated to CCHS during these amazing events. And in record time, we raised funds to begin restoration on the Boogersburg School.

Twenty years ago, CCHS received the School as a gift and was charged with continuing the rich programming that began with Bob Struble and Susan Crary: to share the experience of a 19th century one room school with elementary students and adults alike. CCHS is now ready to undertake its restoration and repairs which will include tree and landscape work, set to begin the end of August. We couldn't be more thankful to The Hamer Foundation and our donors who are making this possible. Our contractors have been working diligently with us through planning this work and we are looking forward to getting started!

Taking care of historic sites is an honor. And as many of you know, a labor of love. Why else would we put so much of our hearts into preserving sites that are dear to us and dear to the community? The hard work and financial burden alone are not for the faint of heart, which is what makes our Board of Governors, committee chairs, volunteers, funding agencies, donors, and contractors for such projects so critical. It takes the right team and the right support. The following pages in *Mansion Notes* detail just that: the generosity of many to make CCHS not only function, but thrive.

With that, I am thrilled to extend our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations on behalf of our Board of Governors to CCHS President Roger Williams and Karen Magnuson, both named 2024 Penn State Renaissance Fund honorees! Roger joined the CCHS Board of Governors in 2017 after his retirement as Executive Director of the Penn State Alumni Association. In 2022, he became the Society's President and, championed our membership, annual giving efforts, and fundraising efforts with our Development Committee for three major capital campaigns to fund the Mansion Restoration project and now the Boogersburg School project. Roger and Karen are, of course, also engaged community leaders and volunteers beyond CCHS and we couldn't be more pleased for them.

~ Mary Sorensen



Roger Williams and Karen Magnuson.
Photo from psu.edu/news/development-and-alumni-relations.

We are grateful for grant support from The Hamer Foundation this quarter to help fund the Boogersburg School Restoration Project. And to the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau for Tourism Grant funding for the Centre County Explorers Passport, out of area marketing, and for an America250PA Bells Across Pennsylvania Liberty Bell.

**THE HAMER
FOUNDATION**



This project is made possible in part through a grant provided by the Centre County Board of Commissioners and The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Gift that is Penns Creek

By Roger L. Williams

One of the best benefits of my work with the Centre County Historical Society is the opportunity to learn more and more about our county's 250 years of history. I've made some progress, but realize I have barely scratched the surface.

The same is true of American history. Majoring in history at Penn State, I laid American History aside for courses in modern European history and lesser-known areas—East Africa, East Asia, African American.

Since retirement, and acutely aware of my ignorance, I have returned to American history with a vengeance. Fortunately, I've been edified by brilliant scholars such as Jill Lepore (*These Truths: A History of the United States*, 2018); Joseph Ellis (*American Creation*, 2007); David Hackett Fischer (*Albion's Seed*, 1989, and *Washington's Crossing*, 2004); David McCullough (*Truman*, 1992, and *The Pioneers*, 2019); Roger Geiger (two-volume history of *American Higher Education*, 2015, 2019); Allan Nevins (two-volume biography of *Grover Cleveland*, 1932); Nathaniel Philbrick (*Mayflower*, 2006); Jay Winik (*April 1865*, 2001) Isabel Wilkerson (*The Warmth of Other Suns*, 2010); H.W. Brands (*Our First Civil War*, 2022); Doris Kearns Goodwin (*Team of Rivals*, 2005); Dan Flores (*Wild New World*, 2022) and so on. The more I learn, the less I know—the frustrating trap of the pursuit of knowledge.

One other thing I have learned is that local history can offer unexpected gems as well. What has impressed me lately is an engaging volume entitled *A Penns Creek Companion: A History and Guide* by Douglas Macneal. Doug was a vital force on the board of the Centre County Historical Society for decades, including the editorship from 1986 to 2009 of the semi-annual publication *Centre County Heritage*.

I came onto the CCHS board in 2017, a few years after Doug went off, suffering from Parkinson's disease. He died in 2020 at age 87. I wish I could have met him and told him how much I learned from everything he packed into his 204-page *Penns Creek Companion*. His book was published in 2005 by the Penns Valley Conservation Association and re-published in a second edition in 2021 with the help of his family.

In my view, it is a minor masterpiece, born of his nearly life-long residency, experience, observations and questions about the area. His scholarship and masterful writing shine forth throughout. His deep love of place and desire to preserve and share it permeate the narrative, implicitly and explicitly.

A tour-de-force might be another way to describe it. Doug starts at the very beginning—the geological formation of our ridge-and-valley region and the Nittany Arch within it, which stretches from the Allegheny Plateau, down the Allegheny Front, through the Bald Eagle Valley and Ridge, across the Nittany and Penns valleys with Nittany Mountain in between.

Macneal writes about the spectacular Karoondinha Gorge and the waters of Penns Creek and its tributaries. Over its 60-mile course from Penns Cave to Selinsgrove on the Susquehanna, Penns Creek is the longest and largest limestone creek in Pennsylvania.

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Upcoming Events

Please note that, due to limited seating, reservations are required for some programs by calling 814-234-4779 or reserving through the event listing at centrehistory.org.

Centre Furnace Mansion Tours are available on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Please call us at 814-234-4779 or visit CentreHistory.org/visit-us/ visit for more information.

September 8 (tentative), 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Boogersburg School Open House
1021 Fox Hill Rd., State College.

September 22, 2:00 p.m.
Slavery and the Underground Railroad by Cooper H. Wingert.
At the American Philatelic Society, Bellefonte. RSVP required.

October 3, United Way Day of Caring at the Centre Furnace Mansion.

October 12, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. BSA Genealogy Merit Badge. Registration required.

October 13, 2:00 p.m. *The Vanishing American Diner* by Chuck Fong. RSVP required.

December 6-8, Stocking Stuffer Magical Holiday Market at the Centre Furnace Mansion.

Mansion Notes, 2009 through 2022 are available on our website at <https://centrehistory.org/research-explore/cchs-mansion-notes-archive>.

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Slavery and the Underground Railroad in South Central Pennsylvania

Talk and Book Signing by Cooper H. Wingert
Sunday, September 22, 2:00 p.m., at the Match Factory, Bellefonte, RSVP Needed

Cooper Wingert, historian and author of 10 books about the Civil War and the Underground Railroad, will present “*Slavery and the Underground Railroad in South Central Pennsylvania*.” Based on new archival research, this talk will illuminate how the Underground Railroad consisted of white and Black people whose actions were more open than many think.

Wingert’s first book, *The Confederate Approach on Harrisburg*, won the James I. Robertson Jr. Award in 2012. He also has published a seminal article in *The Journal of American History*—the leading academic journal in the field—on northern resistance to laws mandating the return of fugitive slaves to southern owners. A scholar completing his Ph.D. in history at Georgetown University, Wingert serves as Assistant Director of the National Park Service project titled “Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands.”

Slavery & the Underground Railroad in South Central Pennsylvania is an illustrated talk based on Wingert’s book which shows how the region became a battleground in the fight against slavery. Freedom seekers journeying through the state connected with free Black communities and white allies willing to shelter and assist

them. Runaways and antislavery activists employed legal maneuvers, and sometimes violence, to resist slave catchers and undermine federal fugitive slave laws. Based on new archival research, the talk illuminates how the Underground Railroad consisted of white and Black people whose actions were more open than many think, and whose legacies continue to have an impact today.

Please note that this program will be held at the American Philatelic Society, located at 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte.

Slavery & the Underground Railroad in South Central Pennsylvania will be available for purchase online through our Museum Store and at the program.

RSVPs are required and may be made by calling 814-234-4779 or reserving online at CentreHistory.org and scroll down to events.



Cooper H. Wingert.

This program is part of the *Henszey-Pyle Distinguished Author Series* underwritten by the Anne Hamilton Henszey Pyle and Kenneth B. Pyle Educational Fund for Regional Heritage Preservation (Henszey-Pyle Fund.)

The Vanishing American Diner

Presented by Chuck Fong
Sunday, October 13, 2:00 p.m. RSVP Needed



Chuck Fong.

State College photographer Chuck Fong will present an illustrated talk based on his book: *Dinor Bleu: The Vanishing American Diner*, co-authored with Anne Walker.

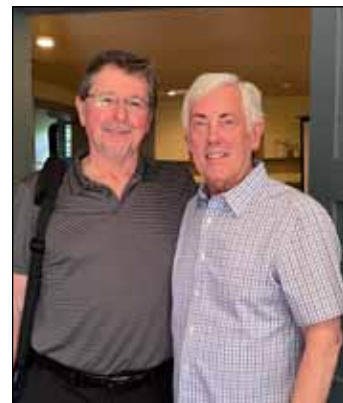
Drawing on his photography and experiences, Fong will share

the essence and charm of these iconic establishments that have long been a mainstay of American culture but are now slowly disappearing.

During the presentation, Fong will share insights into the inspiration behind the book, the process of documenting diners throughout the country, and the stories of the people who run them. Attendees will gain a deeper appreciation for the history, architecture, and community spirit that diners represent. “These old diners are mom-and-pop operations and draw the majority of their patrons from the ‘locals’ who sit on the same stool and order the same food item during each visit,” Fong says.

Thank You

We extend our sincere gratitude to Pat Little who generously contributed a presentation *The Way I Saw It* based in part on his book *Penn State Now and Then*. The audience, largely people who remembered Pat’s storied career, had plenty of nostalgia to take in and share.



Pat Little and Roger Williams.

JOIN US FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

United Way Day of Caring

Thursday, October 3, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

The 30th Annual United Way Day of Caring is around the corner and we are looking forward to welcoming volunteers for a productive day at the Centre Furnace Mansion! With upcoming restoration work anticipated, the Boogersburg School will not be included this year.

The Day of Caring is the largest day of service that CCHS annually hosts. We have welcomed as many as 200 volunteers. It cannot be overstated how important this service day has been for CCHS in its efforts to maintain our two historic sites. We could not do this without the many volunteers, organizations and business who turn out to contribute and help us with projects ranging from landscape and garden work, tree work, painting, organizing and clean-up work. It is extraordinary.

We rely on our CCHS volun-

teers and members to help lead groups, plan or volunteer for the Day of Caring.

How can you help?

If you can garden, do handy projects, paint, lead a volunteer project or can roll up your sleeves and dig in where needed, we can use the extra hands! We will provide information on specific projects.

You can assist with preparation during the days ahead (set up registration tent and project areas) or help clean up at the end of the day when our volunteers are ready for a much-needed rest!

Contribute garden tools such as leaf and garden rakes, shovels, loppers, mulch forks, garden gloves, and hand tools, and painting supplies such as brushes, rollers and trays, and

vinyl gloves. All of these items are used frequently for service days through the year.

Not able to attend, but would like to help? You can be a Day of Caring supporter by contributing toward lunch and supplies. For more information, contact Mary Sorensen at 814-234-4779 or msorensen@centrefurnace.org or check for updates on our website:



BSA Genealogy Merit Badge to be Offered

Through this Scouts BSA merit badge, participants will take a beginners look into the world of Genealogy. We will use standard tools to organize information, create the foundation of a family tree, conduct basic online search, evaluate sources and take a side quest into the archives of the Centre County Historical Society.

This session will be held Saturday, October 12, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at the Centre Furnace Mansion

Scouts should visit CentreHistory.org for more details and to register.

This merit badge session is being hosted by Johanna Sedgwick, marketing and events coordinator at the Centre County Historical Society and a Scouts BSA registered merit badge counselor.

Save the Date for Stocking Stuffer!

Friday, December 6 - Sunday, December 8, 2024

Stocking Stuffer Sponsors & Supporters Needed!

The Stocking Stuffer is the Historical Society's largest fundraiser and is critical to providing nearly 20% of CCHS's annual budget. As this event has grown, sponsorship is even more important to provide an event of this scale. Join Scholar Hotels LLC, McQuaide Blasko, and Mimi Barash Coppersmith in supporting the Stocking Stuffer this year. Support in this way will help offset expenses associated with the event and allocate a larger percentage of the profit to CCHS's mission work.

Here are a few options:

Stocking Supporter: \$100
Your name will go on the event website page and in the CCHS newsletter.

Stocking Stuffer Room Sponsor: \$250 Supporter benefits plus your name/logo on the

CCHS website and a panel in a period room for the duration of the Stocking Stuffer as hundreds of guests stroll through.

Volunteer! We have over 200 time slots that we need to fill to set up, carry out and clean up during the Stocking Stuffer!

For information on contributing in any way to the 2024 Stocking Stuffer, please contact: Mary Sorensen: msorensen@centrefurnace.org or Johanna Sedgwick: jsedgwick@centrefurnace.org, or call us at: 814-234-4779, or scan the QR code below.

Stocking Stuffer Chair:
Deb McManus



Artwork donated by Megan Elmer

We extend our gratitude to the 2024 Event Sponsors for the Stocking Stuffer Magical Holiday Market!



MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAY

Current CCHS members will again have the opportunity to attend the Stocking Stuffer before it opens to the public. **Save the date for Thursday, December 5.** Watch your mailbox in November for a postcard invitation!

CentreHistory.org/Stocking-Stuffer

Plant Celebration Thank You for a Record Setting Event!



From left: CFM Gardeners Michael Husband, Jane Whitaker, Mike Canich, Judy Heberling, Yvonne Gaudelius, Beverly Lipski, Frank Barksdale, Chris Igo, Katie Frieden.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2024 Centre Furnace Mansion Plant Celebration on May 11. The clouds parted for us to have ample sunshine, a well-attended sale, and record-setting day! We couldn't be more grateful.

At the heart of this special event lies an extraordinary outpouring of enthusiasm, talent, hard work, and dedication, starting with the tireless efforts and generous donations of our Centre Furnace Mansion (CFM) Garden Committee. The Gardeners took the opportunity to begin Thursday garden days in early February this year, courtesy of the unseasonably warm days. This was the start of countless hours of planning;

potting plants from the Mansion's and their own gardens; and inventorying and labeling each of the nearly 1000 plants. On the day of the event, the CFM Gardeners, many of whom are Master Gardeners, transition to an educational role to assist shoppers with their myriad questions about the plants that are for sale.

Bouquets of appreciation to our dedicated volunteers and contributors for the donations of beautiful plants and hundreds of hours of time spent during planning, preparation for, and hosting the Plant Celebration, leading tours inside the Mansion, and enticing new members to join the CCHS! We are also grateful to the vendors who



Left: Blue Mountain Quality Resources Volunteers: Krystal Rutter, Corey Bucker, Lisa Bowman, Brandon Noldy. Right: Penn State Master Gardener tent: Kari Reyburn, Janet Robinson, Tim Damico, Tom Reyburn.



Fair Winds III: Laurel Sanders, Rich Manning, Jenny Koberna.

bring a grand assortment of plants and garden-related treasures that complement the sale. The much-needed proceeds

from the Plant Celebration are directed toward the care of the Centre Furnace Mansion's gardens and grounds.

Chamber Ensembles from Grace Lutheran Church
Special thanks to The Whistle Tones flute quartet and Fair Winds III woodwind trio for contributing their time and talent to fill the Mansion with enchanting performances:

Penni Abram (flute)
Lauren Godfrey (flute)
Jenny Koberna (clarinet)
Joan Kovalchik (flute)
Rich Manning (bassoon)
Laurel Sanders (flute)

Blue Mountain Quality Resources

For helping us set up for the sale, we thank the following team from Blue Mountain Quality Resources:
Brandon Noldy
Lisa Bowman
Krystal Rutter
Corey Buckner

Penn State Master Gardeners of Centre County
Many thanks to the Penn State Master Gardeners for being on hand to field gardening questions throughout the day:
Tim Damico
Kari Reyburn
Janet Robinson

R. Thomas Berner
Photography exhibition with sale proceeds designated to the Centre County Historical Society.

American Philatelic Society
Ken Martin

Centre Centre Furnace Mansion Gardeners
Frank Barksdale
Susan Bowser
Lucy Boyce
Mike Canich
Joyce Christini

Katie Frieden, Co-Chair
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Centre Furnace Mansion Docents and Greeters
Elizabeth Dutton
Jude Larkin
Gloria Nieweg
Lynn Royse
Joy Schon

Donation of unique, heirloom, and native plants and garden related items:

Lucy Boyce
Lisa Coggins
Joyce Christini
Michele Ebaugh
Rina Eiden
Katie Frieden
Yvonne Gaudelius
Judy Heberling
Mike Husband
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Betty Stanford
Jan Villastrigo
Steve Wheeler
Jane Whitaker

CCHS Tops Arts & Culture Category of Centre Gives

The Centre County Historical Society's recent participation in Centre Gives was a huge success, thanks to the support of 142 generous donors who contributed a \$26,540. Of this total, \$13,025 was designated to the Boogersburg School Restoration and \$500 for bird friendly plantings at the Centre Furnace Mansion. Additionally, you helped us win a \$600 prize and the stretch pool funds exceeded \$3200. After fees, our grand total was \$29,366. We extend our deepest gratitude to all of our donors for their incredible generosity. Your donations will help us to continue our mission of preserving and promoting the history of Centre County. We would also like to express our thanks to Centre Foundation for hosting this incredible giving event that benefits more than 240 non-profits county-wide. Of the 26 organizations in the Arts and Culture category of Centre Gives, CCHS finished in first place because of you. Thank you once again for helping us make a difference in our community.

- | | | | | |
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| Pamela L. Francis | | | Sara & Thomas F. Songer, II | |
| Barbara Franco | | | Mary & Peter Sorensen | |
| | | | Carol Spangler | |

CENTRE COUNTY EXPLORERS DAY

Centre County Explorers Day was held on June 9 and guests were treated to demonstrations of 19th century building tools, tours of the Centre Furnace Mansion and engaged with Passport representatives from Discovery Space, Boalsburg Heritage Museum, and Advent Historical Society. We extend our appreciation to docents Gloria Nieweg, Karen Hazel, Elliott Abrams, Patty Mutzcek, Elizabeth Dutton, and

Linda Witmer for guiding tours. Special thanks to Dick Pencek for interpreting the 19th century tools at the Jackie's Joinery tool exhibit.

We extend our gratitude to The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau and C their generous funding of the Centre County Explorers Passport booklets. Passport booklets are free and available at the Centre Furnace Mansion and The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau visitor center.



Barbara Franco, board president of the Advent Historical Society, with Representative Paul Takac.



Roger William with Commissioner Mark Higgins.



Dick Pencek teaches a visitor to make wooden pegs.



CCHS Docents Karen Hazel and Linda Witmer with Mansion visitors.

BSA Eagle Scout Project

At the Centre Furnace Mansion

This spring, Lily Cramer from Scouts BSA Troop 35, Bellefonte, worked to complete her Eagle Scout project. Lily chose the Centre Furnace Mansion because she was looking for a conservation project. The Centre Furnace Mansion Garden Committee was also looking for a way to attract more birds. Nesting boxes offer birds a more convenient place to put their nest, and can be placed so that

they are safer from predators. The House Wren and American Kestrel are two species that are currently in decline. Using information from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Nest Watch program, Lily researched, designed and installed five bird boxes and two mourning dove baskets, strategically placed throughout the grounds to attract birds. She also repainted the existing Purple Martin box and

purchased new hardware for the pole and supports.

We extend our gratitude to Eagle Scout Cramer, Troop 35, and Troop 34 and their family and friends for their contributions. Installation took place on May 7. Special thanks to Brian and Johanna Sedgwick for guiding this project.



Left: Troop 35 members from top left to right: Mike Fry, Austin Fry (Troop 34), Liz Timblin, Aislynn Timblin, Claudia Vinnedge, Bella Fry, Hailey Vinnedge. Front row: Mary Sorensen presenting Lily with a certificate of appreciation from CCHS. Above: Lily Cramer with fellow Troop 35 members installing a bird box.



Potter Township 250th Anniversary

Thank you to the Potter Township Parks and Recreation anniversary committee for the invitation to attend and participate in the Potter Township Heritage Day on June 8.

Many visitors successfully identified where they currently live on the 1861 map of Potter Township by S.D. Tilden. The mountains, streams and early roads provided great clues!

Johanna Sedgwick, CCHS, with Progress Grange President Denny McCloskey who was dressed as Leonard Rhone. The Progress Grange in Centre Hall is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year and was founded under the direction of Leonard Rhone.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

The Centre County Historical Society is a community of dedicated colleagues and volunteers from a variety of professions and interests. With a number of initiatives and activities, the need for volunteer participation is critically important and continues to grow.

Whether your interest is local history, guiding tours, gardening, event planning, office projects, collections, writing, educational programming, handy projects, or fundraising events like the Stocking Stuffer holiday market or the Plant Celebration in May, we would love to hear from you.

Of particular need, we have ongoing scanning, data entry, indexing and other office related needs. A working knowledge of Excel and comfort level with computer work is necessary.

We thank the following for their contributions that are not



Judy Heberling and Judy Speedy at the Volunteer Appreciation Reception

otherwise noted in Mansion Notes this quarter:

Judy Heberling, weekly collections processing activities; Kathy Johnston, data entry; Paula Wilson, collections care; Judy Speedy, weekly library projects; and Lynn Padgett for creating a new brochure about

the Mansion's architecture. Special thanks to Betty Arnold for indexing *Town&Gown* issues! Please contact Mary Sorensen at msorensen@centrefurnace.org or 814-234-4779 if you are interested in volunteering! Scan the QR code for more information.



Laura Contino and Kathy Johnston at the 2024 Plant Celebration.



GARDENERS' CORNER

Many thanks to the Centre Furnace Garden Committee for the countless hours logged throughout the year, but particularly these hot days. It is their planning, consistency, and dedication that keep the Mansion gardens looking their best.

We are also grateful to State College Area High School students Liam Hickman and Andrew Baxter for volunteering three mornings each week this summer. JustServe Elders Lake and Carns and Sisters Barlow and Scoville volunteer throughout the year twice per week. We couldn't keep up without each of you!

During the heat of the summer, the CFM Garden Committee meets Thursday mornings from 9:00–11:00 a.m. If you would be interested in helping out in this way, either stop by or contact Mary Sorensen at msorensen@centrefurnace.org for more information.

Special thanks go out to our “regulars” in the gardens who continue to press on the summer heat and bring expertise, experience to their planning and work in the gardens.: Frank Barksdale, Mike Canich, Joyce Christini, Katie Frieden, Yvonne Gaudelius, Carol Gouty, Judy Heberling and Michael Husband, Chris Igo, Beverly Lipski, Louis Mayer, Ruth Merritt, Sharon Phillips, Jan Villastrigo, and Jane Whitaker.



Top: Liam Hickman and Andrew Baxter. Center: Just Serve Sisters. Bottom: Just Serve Elders.

DOCENTS' CORNER

CCHS Docents have been hard at work during the past quarter with regular public tours, school tours at the Mansion and at Boogersburg School, and special group tours.

We thank the following Mansion Docents for their dedicated service this quarter: Elliot Abrams, Bill Blair, Elizabeth Dutton, Bronwyn Flemming, Carol Gentry, Steve Gentry, Melissa Gundrum, Karen Hazel, Jude Larkin, Patty Mutzeck, Gloria Nieweg, Lynn Royse, Joy Schon, Bonnie Walter, and Linda Witmer.

Call for Docents!

This fall, we have a special opportunity for those of you who are interested in sharing the Centre Furnace story with Penn Staters. On Saturday and Sunday, October 19 and 20, CCHS will be taking part in Penn State's Family Weekend. We are planning a schedule of tours at the Mansion to accommodate up to 285 guests for tours. We



Kimberly Townsend and Doyle Wilkerson

will be looking for volunteers beyond our current Docent Committee to accommodate this ambitious schedule. Each floor will have its own script and it is a great opportunity for those who want to would like to try out being a docent!

Contact Mary Sorensen at 814-234-4779 or msorensen@centrefurnace.org for more information.



Lynn Royse and students visiting with a home school tour this spring.



The CCHS staff and Board of Governors hosted their 2024 Volunteer Appreciation Reception on the evening of June 13 for nearly 60 of our volunteers. We are grateful for the time, commitment and passion that dedicated volunteers bring to the Historical Society to expand our reach and capacity in every way.

Historic Boogersburg School Restoration to Begin, Fundraising to Continue

The much-needed restoration of the historic Boogersburg School begins in August, while fundraising for the project continues throughout the summer and early fall. The plan is to complete the once-in-a generation restoration by summer 2025.

Fundraising for the project has been going well. Leadership gifts and pledges raised since March 14 amount to \$109,000. In addition, we have received a \$105,000 grant for this work from The Hamer Foundation of State College created by Donald H. Hamer.

The \$214,000 in hand should fund the majority of the work, but contingencies and extra costs due to unanticipated problems likely will drive the total cost higher.

Veronesi Building and Remodeling, Inc., of State College will serve as the general contractor for the restoration which will include the schoolhouse and outbuildings. President Rob Veronesi will work with Mary Sorensen to guide the project to completion. We are grateful to Alan Popovich who helped identify the scope and approximate costs of the project prior to estimates being received. Restoration of the Boogersburg School will adhere to The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Meanwhile, a direct-mail fundraising campaign to CCHS members is under way to encourage further gift support. Any



Stone path will be replaced with a trail medium that is accessible.

Top: Boogersburg School

Left: Current fuse box with glass fuses will be replaced with a circuit breaker panel. The exterior electric meter and wire will be updated from 30 to 100 amps.

Center: Current condition of the exterior of the windows. Plans are for removing, restoring, repairing and painting the eight operable windows.

Right: Current condition of the foundation which will be evaluated, repaired and shored up.

funds in excess of final costs will be placed in the Boogersburg School Fund to cover cyclical maintenance and repairs in the years ahead. The fund was established in April by the Board of Governors through Panko Wealth Management for the receipt of fundraising revenue and the payment of contractors.

Work is scheduled to begin in late August by Cutting Edge Tree Professionals of Pleasant

Gap. Tree work will include selective tree removal including the large Norway Maple behind the school that threatens the structure. Pruning and stump removal around the school and wooded area will follow.

In August, House Wire Electric, Inc., of State College will upgrade the electrical system from 30 to 100 amps. Work will include also include a new electric panel and outlet that will be

discreetly placed in a coat closet. A hard-wired ceiling light with motion sensor will be installed on the front porch.

Alex's ProScape will prepare a landscape plan which will preserve the historical integrity of Boogersburg School property and create a more accessible, educational, and environmentally friendly space for visitors and the surrounding community.



View of Boogersburg School where tree work is needed along Fox Hill Road. The large Norway Maple, scheduled for removal, is shown at the right side of the photo at rear of the school.

A Living History Museum

The Boogersburg School, along Fox Hill Road on the way to the State College Regional Airport, was given to the CCHS in 2004 by Bob Struble and Susan Cray, on the condition that it continue serving as a living history museum. They had purchased the building from Sybil Barsky Grucci, a nationally known sculptor and artist, in 2001. With her husband, Grucci had purchased the school upon its closure in 1953 and used it as a sculpting studio.

Struble had thoughtfully restored the school with the help of a former teacher and students, bringing it back as true as possible to its original state and opening it as a museum. Since 2004, when acquired by the CCHS, thousands of students

and adults alike have delighted in learning about what a student experienced in a typical day, complete with an authentic classroom and curriculum, historical artifacts, and interactive exhibits. CCHS docents, most of them retired teachers, dress in period garb and put the students through their paces.

The CCHS also holds an open house annually, attracting visitors from throughout the community, including many whose parents and grandparents were students at Boogersburg, and even some former students themselves. The school is a big part of the CCHS's programming and community outreach, demonstrating how American schoolchildren (grades 1-8) were educated for more than 100 years between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

Historical Significance

Of the 180 one-room "common schools" in Centre County in the 1870s—Boogersburg is the last remaining schoolhouse that resembles its original purpose and is used accordingly.

The Boogersburg School is connected to Centre Furnace Mansion's history through Moses Thompson, former ironmaster and owner of vast tracts of land in Centre County. Thompson deeded the property to Patton Township on May 1, 1877, to build a school to ensure an education for the children of his tenant farmers who lived more than two miles from Centre

Furnace. Generally, common schools were built about two miles apart from neighboring schools to ensure that children could walk to them in relatively short order.

Common School Movement

The "Father of the Common School Movement" was Horace Mann of Massachusetts, who led the educational reform movement as the first secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education (1837). The goals were several – to provide a free education for children that was grounded in religious, moral, and civic virtue; to professionalize the training of teachers; and to establish state control over public schools, ensuring uniformity of curriculum, high standards, and the development of a literate, educated citizenry deemed essential for the proper functioning of a democracy.

Before the rise of common schools, education was essentially private, taught by wander-

ing schoolmasters and/or pastors engaged privately by a family or cluster of them.

The movement first gained traction in New England, with other Whig reformers such as Henry Barnard of Rhode Island who valued public education and other public infrastructure programs.

In Pennsylvania, the Common School Law of 1834 got things started, although there was resistance at first to the threat of the loss of local control. The prime mover was Thomas H. Burrowes, secretary of the commonwealth and ex officio head of the common school system, 1835-39. Burrowes went on to found, edit and publish the *Pennsylvania School Journal* and later served as state superintendent of common schools from 1860-63. He also led the movement and framed the law, passed in 1857, for the establishment of Pennsylvania's normal schools (teachers' colleges),

Continued on page 12



Above: At the 2014 Boogersburg Open House Sharon Childs talks with Bill Spearly about his time attending the Boogersburg School.

Below: Class of 1933, Bill is in the second row from the back, fourth from left. CCHS 2004.01.01



Visitors ringing the school bell, notice the additional ropes used for the pulley system to ring the bell and open and close the roof vents.

Boogersburg

Continued from page 11

Millersburg being the first. Of course, Burrowes is best known locally as the fourth president of Penn State (then the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania) from 1868-71.

Common schools typically taught “the three Rs”—reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic—as well as history and geography. The McGuffey Reader was the favorite schoolhouse text. A strong emphasis on moral, civic, and spiritual virtues was mixed into the lessons.

Boogersburg operated for 75 years, from 1877-1952, serving local schoolchildren during significant chapters in our nation’s history. The school operated through the Gilded Age and Victorian era, across 15 U.S. presidents, two World Wars separated by the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, and the earliest class of the Baby Boom generation.

The Centre County Historical Society invites your gift to help restore this historic



Above: Boogersburg school interior in 1998 while owned by Sybil Barsky Grucci and used as her sculpting studio.

Right: Sibyl Barsky (Grucci) working on a portrait bust of Perl Braskin Weinberg, 1930s. *Sibyl Barsky Grucci Photographs, MSP 423, Detre Library & Archives at the Heinz History Center.*

school— this unique part of Centre County history— for future generations. Checks may be sent to the Centre County Historical Society, 1001 E. College Ave., State College, Pa. 16801, or you may donate online by scanning the QR code below

or going to centrehistory.org and clicking the “donate” link at the top of the page.



Thank you to Boogersburg School Leadership Gift Donors

(March 14 - June 30)

The Hamer Foundation

Robert Van Druff and Cynthia Dawso Van Druff

David L. Grove



Joan Hawbaker Brower
O. Richard Bundy III
Galen and Nancy Dreibelbis
Roger Eisinger
Ellen Foster
Marilyn and Dennis Gouran
Carol and Lee Walter Gouty
Daniel and Suzie Hawbaker
Lamartine and Emeline Hood

Sally and Richard L. Kalin
Patricia and William Moyer
Nancy O’Connor
Kathleen O’Toole and Gary Gray
Thomas L. Smith
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Dolores Taricani
Suzann and Vincent Tedesco
Roger Williams and Karen Magnuson



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Deb McManus
Bob Potter
Sally L. Schaadt

Donna and Rick Schutz
Kathleen Sillman

Gifts received after July 1 will be recognized in the Fall issue of *Mansion Notes*.

ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

From the Archives

by Jackie Esposito

One of the most frustrating experiences when working with historical documents and photographs is the lack of basic fields of information: names, dates, and locations. Imagine the excitement of this CCHS archivist when I came upon this lovely photograph of the 1930 Kindergarten Class from East Fairmount School.

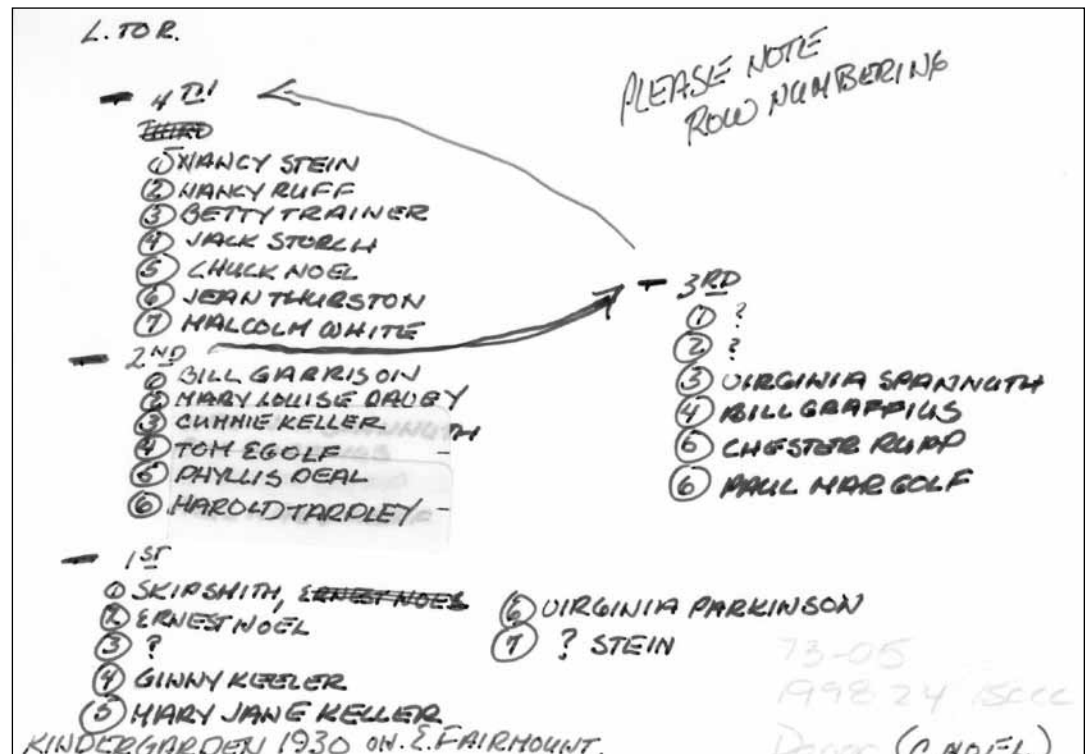
As exciting and lovely as the front of the photograph itself, the back was a delight for this archivist. As you can see, Chuck Noel took the time to identify most of the students in the photograph. I literally squealed when I turned the photograph over. Look at the names, several belong to long-time State College families (White, Rupp, Noel, Keeler, Egolf). Yes, many had parents affiliated with and acknowledged for their service at Penn State (Keller, Smith, and Davey).

The names led me to conduct research as to the lives of these young scholars post-East Fairmount School. Many of them were born in 1925, and continued their educations in State College elementary, middle, and high school as well as Penn State University. At least six of them participated in the community Drum Corps and many of the young men served in World War II. Almost all of them either stayed in or returned to State College during their lives. **Do you have information on the four (4) students that Chuck was unable to identify?** If you do, please contact CCHS so we can add their names and legacy to the historic record.

One amazing student, Charles "Skip" Smith (row 1, number 1) is still alive (yes, almost 100 years old) and living in State College. Skip has been a fixture in the State College community his entire life. As a Penn State alum, his philanthropy launched the construction of the Arboretum, and an additional gift endowed the Arboretum's Executive Director position. He has also been a long-time and dependable supporter of CCHS and its initiatives.



A fabulous image of 26 State College children dressed in their Halloween finest. The image was donated to CCHS by Chuck Noel (the blond boy, #5, in the fourth row, left-right). CCHS Places and Spaces Collection, 1998.PS.1659



Reverse of image showing the listing of names. CCHS Places and Spaces Collection, 1998.PS.1659

The moral of this story from the archivist's perspective: **Label and identify your photographs.** Their informational and historical value is greatly

enhanced by this critical activity. Not only will you make a future archivist joyful, but you will also preserve the legacy of our ancestors. It is the responsibil-

ity of all of us to preserve our history before it is lost forever.

Restoration of the Kitchen Garden Now Under Way



Alex's ProScape assisting Philip Hawk with their equipment to reset the stone steps from the porch to walkway.

Kitchen gardening is steeped in history. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the outbreak of Asian Cholera in the urban areas of America had a great impact on the way of life in rural America. As an alternative to unhealthy urban life, all of the positive aspects of gardening (a diet with plenty of fresh vegetables, physical exercise, spending time in the garden and country living) became the vision of the good life in America.

The Centre Furnace Mansion Kitchen Garden has been a favorite garden feature of the Mansion's grounds since it was created in the 1980s. The charming space is enclosed by

the Spring House, Mansion, and the building that replaced the old Ice House in 2006 and now houses the CCHS Archives. Jim Deeslie, a Penn State landscape architect, who served on the Historical Society's earliest garden committee, designed the foundation of the kitchen garden based on the location of the remains of an old stone wall. Louise Goldschmidt, another landscape architect, was the initial designer of the kitchen garden. Louise, Margery Johnstone, Barbara Miller and Marian Jones researched the design and contents of Victorian kitchen gardens for accuracy and Marian took care of the garden for a decade.

Mansion restoration work over the past three years impacted this area, but work is now under way to restore the garden. This work is now especially important because it bridges the space between the Mansion and its archives. It will make the area more accessible and, of course, beautiful again.

Assisted by Alex's ProScape, Philip Hawk reset the heavy limestone steps in June that had settled over time. This work was necessary before brick pavers could be relaid under the porch and side of the Mansion, and the walkway to the Ice House Archive building.

In September, the professional team from Alex's ProScape will be back to re-lay the brick pavers, install edging to delineate the garden spaces, and

recreate the original paths with a more accessible, permeable compacted trail aggregate mix.

Since 2000 a team of Master Gardeners and CCHS volunteers formed the Centre Furnace Mansion Garden Committee. They oversee work in the Kitchen Garden and other gardens at the Mansion.

Thank you to donors for this project:

Linda Witmer

**Judy Heberling and
Michael Husband in memory
of Louise Heberling**

**Philip Hawk & Co.,
partial in-kind donation**

If you are interested in contributing to this effort, please contact Mary Sorensen at msorensen@centrefurnace.org.



Master Stone Mason Philip Hawk, Philip Hawk & Co.

New Exhibit Features Folk Art

A Part of Early American Life, curated by Richard W. Pencek

Step back in time and explore the rich tapestry of early American life through the lens of folk art at the Centre Furnace Mansion. Curated by Richard Pencek, examples of folk art from his own collection are displayed in the Mansion's period kitchen exhibit case.

Examples of Toleware, or decorative tin kitchen related objects ranging from storage containers to tea caddies are on display.

Wood carving pieces feature birds, butter prints and fish decoys.

See decorative flasks and beverage glasses attributed to

Henry William Stiegel, a prominent glassmaker of the 18th century.

Watercolor and pen and ink examples were often crafted by students to practice intricate fraktur techniques. Fraktur is a calligraphic style of writing and folk art brought to America by German immigrants in the 18th century. Fraktur often commemorated marriage, birth and baptismal certificates.

This exhibit is part of the Mansion Exhibition Series which celebrates early decorative arts.

The exhibit will be on display until January.



Richard (Dick) Pencek holding one example of fraktur practice that shows written work and painted images.

Centre County Images on Display at the New Penn Highlands Hospital



Exhibit of historical photographs displayed at Penn Highlands Hospital in State College.

When visiting the new Penn Highlands State College medical facility you may notice some familiar scenes throughout the facility. Penn Highlands Healthcare worked with fine art specialist Brian Musser, owner of Myartrep Pro LLC, to source and print historic images of State College and surrounding communities to be displayed in common areas of the new Penn Highlands State College facility.

Brian and Perry Winkler, founder of the Winkler Gallery of Fine Art in Dubois, spent a morning in the CCHS Archive exploring historic photographs from State College and beyond. Not only were they looking for interesting photos, but photos that would tell a story or spark a conversation.

The online *Centre County Encyclopedia of History & Culture* continues to add intriguing articles about Centre County's past. The following articles bring the total of 182:

- *Scotia Barrens* - Ben Cramer
- *Bellefonte Academy* - Brady Wynkoop
- *College Heights* - Juliana Hart
- *Robert Cole* - Ford Risley

The article about Bellefonte Academy was written by Bellefonte High School student Brady Wynkoop, our youngest contributor to the *Encyclopedia*.

We would like to express our gratitude to the volunteer contributors who have made the *Encyclopedia* a successful and expanding repository of knowledge.

Scan the QR code to read more.



Postcard of the Bellefonte Academy after the 1913 building expansion. *CCHS Places & Spaces Collection, 1998.PS.1841*



Cultural and historical sites around Centre County are hosting events for the 2024 season. Please visit their website for full details about listed events and hours.

Events

Midsummer Drum Fest, July 30, 6:00–8:00 p.m. at Rhoneymeade Arboretum. rhoneymeade.org.

Summer Sounds from The Gazebo in Talleyrand Park, Sundays through August 11, 7:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Bellefonte Historical & Cultural Association. Visit bellefontearts.org for schedule of performances.

Classic Auto Show & Community Day, September 28, hosted by the Milesburg Museum. Antique cars, music, kids activities and food on Market Street in Milesburg. milesburg.org

In Their Own Words, September 14, hosted by the Advent Historical Society. A ticketed event and luncheon to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Advent Church and Cemetery. For tickets and information call 717-585-3226.

Mountaintop Historical Day, September 14, 12:00–4:00 p.m., hosted by the David House Heritage Museum. Food, games, museum open house. *Mountaintop's Coal Mining Legacy* history talk, 2:00 p.m. david-house-museum.org.

Oktoberfest, September 14 hosted by the Boalsburg Heritage Museum. Traditional Ok-

toberfest featuring authentic German Food and the Little German Band.

Tours & Exhibits
Exhibit: Soviet Fingerprints - linoleum cut prints by Ilkay Unay, September 6–October 27 at the Bellefonte Art Museum. Opening reception on September 8.

Bellefonte Art Museum
Friday-Sunday, 12:00–4:30 p.m. bellefontemuseum.org

David House Heritage Museum, Snow Shoe
Wednesdays 2:00–4:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Closed Dec.–March. david-house-museum.org.

Milesburg Museum & Historical Society
Through October, Wednesdays 12:00–3:00 p.m., Sundays by appointment. milesburg.org.

Boalsburg Heritage Museum
Tours on Sundays 2:00–4:00 p.m. Closed January–March. boalsburgheritagemuseum.org.

Columbus Chapel and Boal Mansion Museum
Guided tours Wednesday through Sunday at 2:00 p.m. boalmuseum.com.

Penns Valley Area Historical Museum, Aaronsburg
Museum open Saturdays through October 1:00–4:00 p.m. pennsvalleymuseum.org.

Eagle Iron Works and Curtin Village
Guided tours held the 2nd and 4th Sunday at 2:00 p.m., July through September. curtinvillage.com.

Looking for more events and places to visit in Centre County? Visit **The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau** at happyvalley.com.

Herstory

Continued from cover article

Rebecca Valentine Pugh

Feb. 12, 1832 - July 7, 1921

The eldest daughter of prestigious Bellefonte ironmaster Abram S. Valentine and Clarissa Miles and wife of Penn State's first President, Evan Pugh (1859-1864), Rebecca led a charmed life as an ironmaster's "princess." She possessed a great love of poetry, was fluent in German, and had an intellectual spirit. Rebecca met Evan Pugh at the family estate, Willowbank, in Bellefonte when Pugh came to consult in 1861 about smelting iron ore. Rebecca's family declared their meeting as "love at first sight." Rebecca married Evan on February 4, 1864, after an extended courtship. Their marriage lasted only two months (86 days) as Evan Pugh died on April 29, 1864, from complications of typhus and overwork.



Rebecca Valentine Pugh.
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State University Archives.

Her life is often noted as 57 years of devoted widowhood, but she was also known for her staunch support of abolitionism and social justice. She returned to the Penn State campus twice during her lifetime: to present a portrait of Pugh to the first graduating class (1861) reunion and to attend the semi-centennial of Penn State founding. Her friend David Cameron is quoted as saying Rebecca "would shine in the very best of society" for all her years in Centre County.



First PSU women students, 1871.
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State University Archives.

Lucy Atwood Harding Armsby

Dec. 21, 1853 - Jan. 22, 1935

Lucy was the wife of Henry Prentiss Armsby, Director of Penn States Agricultural Experiment Station and Institute of Animal Nutrition. Born in Orleans, La., she married Henry on October 15, 1878. The couple had five sons (Charles, Ernest, Sidney, Henry, and Edward). Lucy served the partnership by presenting lessons and workshops for family farm activities as well as promoting the role of women in the agricultural enterprise.

1871: First women students

In June 1871, James Calder, fifth Penn State President, brought a proposal before the faculty and Board of Trustees to admit women to the previously all-male school. While faced with an uphill battle for acceptance because "co-eds distracted the boys from their studies and lowered standards of scholarship," Calder persisted and the matter was approved quickly. In September 1871, Penn State became the first college in Pennsylvania to admit women as students to degree programs.

"It was felt the important trust committed to the Board would not be fully administered while one half of the youth of our State were denied its advantages," the trustees concluded.

Ellen Cross, Omro, Wisc., and Rebecca Ewing, Angola, Ind., followed Calder from Hillsdale College (Mich.) to "launch the women's department." Four other women enrolled later that year. By 1878 Penn State had forty-nine female students in residence including Sarah E. Robinson, daughter of F.A. Robinson, mathematics and civil engineering professor. Shortly after the admittance of women, President Calder reported that the women had proven themselves "diligent, orderly, and as successful as the men in the same classes."

Contrary to common belief, there was no women's curriculum. The earliest graduates could major in any subject including engineering. The idea of a women's curriculum did not occur at Penn State until after World War I.



Ladies Cottage, 1891.
<https://sites.psu.edu/nittanyionsandtitleix/2022/10/18/womens-early-sports-history>

Rebecca Ewing graduated in 1873 with a bachelor of science degree, the first woman graduate.

One additional note: technically the first female Penn State student was Minerva Whitman, daughter of Botany professor J.S. Whitman. In 1864 (only five years after Penn State opened). She was given permission to attend her father's class, even though she was not officially enrolled.



Minerva Whitman.
CCHS Town & Gown Photo Collection.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter and her two daughters were the superintendents of the college parlors and culinary department beginning in 1859.

Harriet Aurelia McElwain

Feb. 12, 1859 - Sept. 19, 1942

Harriet, from Becket, Mass., graduated from Mount Holyoke Seminary. She served as Lady

Principal at a grammar school in Springfield, Mass., before accepting a similarly titled position at Penn State in 1883. Her first priority upon arriving was to create appropriate living quarters for women students. The Ladies Cottage was built to her specifications in 1890. McElwain taught history, Latin, and mathematics. She also served as the College's Registrar and secretary to President Atherton. A prominent member of the State College Women's Literary Club promoting higher education for women and civil service reform, she became the namesake for McElwain Hall in 1948.



Helen Atherton Govier.
Courtesy of the Pennsylvania State University Archives.

Helen Atherton Govier
Sept. 26, 1878 - Aug. 4, 1976

The youngest daughter of George and Frances Atherton, Helen earned a bachelor of arts in music from Smith College in 1902 and married Charles Govier (electrical engineering professor at the Penn State) in 1911. Helen taught music at Penn State from 1903-11 and often played at the college's morning chapel services. She endowed the Atherton Memorial Music Award at Penn State in her father's memory. During her lifetime, Helen was acclaimed for her interest in local history and its preservation. An early suffragette, she often led "Votes for Women" parades with a drum in hand. She organized her father's business and personal correspondence (now in repository at Penn State University Archives). Helen died a



William Thompson Family. Mary Beaver, seated far left. Circa 1900.
CCHS Thompson and Related Family Collection, 2002.06.01.187.

month before her 98th birthday, "leaving a rich legacy of stories, music, and history." She personally rescued an iron drinking fountain donated by the State College Woman's Club from downtown. It is still standing at the Fraser Street entrance to the Sidney Friedman Parklet.

Mary Armstrong Elliott Beaver
Sept. 9, 1823 - March 9, 1912

"May your life have just enough shadow to make a glorious sunset."

Mary Armstrong Elliott Beaver, familiarly called "Grandma Beaver," lived in the Centre Furnace Mansion and kept diaries for more than 40 years describing life in State College and Lewisburg. Yet brief as her diary entries were, her comments about day-to-day events paint quite a complete picture of affluent, middle-class life in Victorian America. Her diaries chronicle deep religious faith, continuous social engagements, and "constant housework."

Mary's first marriage was to Methodist circuit minister John Elliott. When John died in 1852, Mary and her daughter Anna Elliott left Curwensville and moved east to Lewisburg to live with her parents. In 1863,

Mary married Peter Beaver, a widower with five daughters. A son, William, was born in 1865. After the death of Peter in 1890, Mary moved into the Mansion in 1891 with daughter Anna, wife of William Thompson, and her family. Mary and Anna often oversaw Sunday school classes at the Mansion for the neighborhood children.

There are no further journals after 1900 to let her share with us those final years. Her 1900 diary tells us that she was looking forward to the new century with optimism and curiosity.

Mary Beaver's favorite family recipe from *The Presbyterian Cookbook of 1875*:

Drop Jumbles

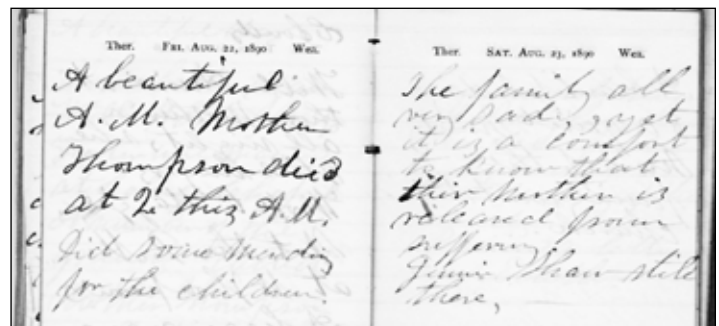
- 1 lb. sugar
- 1 tsp. soda
- ¾ lb. butter
- 1 lb. currants
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- Flour - enough to make the batter "drop" from a spoon.
- Bake until golden.

In future issues, you will meet Teresa Cohen, Clara Phillips, Mary Willard, Lucretia Simmons, Mary Godfrey, Della Durant, Julia Gregg Brill, Dorothy Harris, Rose Cologne, Grace Henderson, Pearl Weston, Nadine Kofman, Sue Paterno and many more significant women leaders and influencers from Centre County, Penn State, and State College.

Jackie R. Esposito is Vice President of the Centre County Historical Society and Archivist/Librarian Emerita at Penn State.

Sources:

- John Blair Linn, *History of Centre and Clinton Counties*, 1883.
- Michael Bezilla, *Penn State: An Illustrated History*, 1985.
- Byham, Sandra. *Glimpses of Life at Centre Furnace Mansion during the 1890's from Grandma Beaver's Journals*, 2003.
- Jo Chesworth, *Story of the Century: State College History*, 1996.
- Douglas McLean, *Centre County Overview*, 2021.
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- Tanya Zanish-Belcher, *Perspective on Women's Archives*, 2013.



Excerpts from Mary Beaver's diary.
August 22, 1890: A beautiful A.M. Mother [Mary Irvin] Thompson died at 2 this A.M. Did some mending for the children.
August 23, 1890: The family all very sad, yet it is a comfort to know that their mother is relieved from suffering. Jennie Shaw still there.
CCHS Thompson and Related Family Collection.

President's Corner

Continued from page 3

Macneal explores the indigenous peoples' paths, the early immigrant roads of the 1770s, and later turnpikes; early churches and schools; railroads and paved roads; township fathers such as Gen. James Potter, William Maclay, Reuben Haines, Samuel Miles, and Aaron Levy; towns and town cultures. Rebersburg, for instance, is notable for its Victorian porches with their intricate gingerbread.

What I found particularly fascinating was his extensive description of the region's forests and their intensive logging history. By 1845, there were 60 water-powered sawmills in Brush and Penns valleys, supplying planks for barns and frame houses. By the 1880s sawmills were beginning to use tram rails for transporting their lumber, just as Williamsport was using the West Branch of the Susquehanna River for the same purpose. And as with Williamsport, lumbering brought small fortunes to successful Penns Valley entrepreneurs at the height of lumber prosperity in the 1890s and early 1900s. It also brought environmental degradation, resulting in what the author calls The Pennsylvania Desert: "Whole regions once forested were turned into barrens by the ten-year tram-road slashings and the forest fires that succeeded them." The restoration/conservation movement with the help of the "State Forest Miracle" eventually reclaimed the landscape.



Doug Macneal at the 2012 Plant Celebration.



Penn's Creek on Penn's Cave Property, Fine Trout Stream, ca. 1907 - 1908. CCHS Cannon Postcard Collection 2001.17.714

Indulging his love of literature, Macneal turns his attention to the Penns Valley poets, storytellers, and teachers such as Henry Meyer, Charles Calvin Ziegler, Harvey Flink, and Margie Gaffron. He offers an extensive passage about a forest fire on Cherry Creek from Fred Lewis Pattee's *The House of the Black Ring* (1916) and a passage about folklorist Henry Shoemaker and his fantasies in *Indian Steps and other Pennsylvania mountain stories*" (1912).

Toward the end, quite unexpectedly, comes Macneal's chapter on "Seeing Trees in Winter"—an illustrated guide to identifying leafless trees for edification and enjoyment in the dead season. Following that is a Penns Creek Sampler, with recommendations for various outings—Penns View and Poe Paddy (and the tunnel and bridge at Poe Paddy), Laurel Park and the Lower Gorge, afternoon walks in Brush Valley, and more. The book is amply illustrated, with maps (Buggy Era Road Network, as one example) photos, charts, and drawings.

"My purpose, freely avowed," Macneal wrote in his preface, "is to fan in you such regard for these superb valleys and their special stream that you join me in the only way to conserve their natural, ecological, historical and cultural resources in all their fragile variety. Neither law

nor policing can avail against the encroachments of 'innocent' greed or the apathy that scatters righteousness like trash out a car window. Only a conspiracy of love to protect these resources and this heritage, fed by infusions of recognition, can move us to become sensitive stewards of our global birthright."

A Penns Creek Companion is a labor of love embodying a plea to preserve and protect this precious natural resource. The epilogue to the second edition, written shortly before he died, lays out his worries about the future, but then provides his reasons for hope. It ends with this prophecy:

"Be not dismayed! The storm is passing over!
Amish order and mindfulness will prevail.
Benign neglect will save us.
The valley is renewing as we watch.
The Woodcock in her bower, our children's play, will see us through.
Renewal is around us everywhere.
Only connect!"

So who was this gentleman and scholar, Doug Macneal? Born and raised in Baltimore, educated at Harvard, he spent most of his life in rural Livonia, in Miles Township at the southeastern end of Centre County.

As a child, he and his family vacationed in Livonia. While in college, Doug returned to work in the area. He met his wife, Pat Miner, while on a Fulbright scholarship in Germany. After his service in the U.S. Army, he and Pat moved to their Livonia farmhouse, raising four children, planting gardens and nurturing goats and chickens.

His professional life revolved around writing and teaching, as a faculty member in Penn State's Department of English. He wrote "Brush Valley Notes," a column for the *Pennsylvania Mirror*, was active in church and choral societies, taught Elderhostel courses, organized watershed monitoring, and authored several books. He was an early member of the Penns Valley Conservation Association.

At the CCHS, in 1986, he took over the editing of *Centre County Heritage*, the semi-annual magazine of the Centre County Historical Society. His long tenure ended with his encroaching illness in 2009, when the last issue was published.

Doug Macneal is gone from our midst, but his influence on Centre County history persists. Guided by his tutelary spirit, I will continue to learn from his extensive research, editing, and writing. I only wish I could have met the man I consider to be the Polymath of Penns and Brush valleys.

Sharing Our Story



The Centre County Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association hosted their reception at the Centre Furnace Mansion on July 14. Thank you to CFM Docents and CCHS President Roger Wil-

liams for providing guests with the history of the Centre Furnace Mansion, birthplace of both the iron making industry in Centre County and The Pennsylvania State University.



Gloria Nieweg, Karen Hazel, Melissa Gundrum, Linda Witmer, Patty Mutzeck, Roger Williams, and Jude Larkin.

Thank you: Legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps: Company 1333 - Camp S-63, Poe Valley

CCC Legacy Day was held on July 28 at Poe Valley State Park. Guests enjoyed good food, and CCC-themed music and programming throughout the day where they learned about the history of the CCC and life in Company 1333 – Camp S-63, Poe Valley. Bill and Mary Marcum began hosting this event almost 40 years ago to honor veterans who served during the CCC during The Great Depression.

We extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors and partners for their contributions to make this day possible: Bill and Mary Marcum, Pennsylvania Depart-

ment of Conservation and Natural Resources, Poe Valley State Park Manager Joshua Bruce and Environmental Interpretive Technician Kylie Omdorf, Mid-State Roofing and Coating, Inc., Millheim Small Engine and Brad L. and Jennifer Wingard.

And enthusiastic cheers to Laura and Michael Contino and Peter Sorensen for helping out with the event.

CCC Legacy Day will transition from an annual to occasional event. We will continue to pursue research about the CCC in Centre County and look forward to future events.



CCC Mess Hall Line-up at Poe Valley.
Courtesy of William Marcum.



Brad L. and Jennifer Wingard



REMEMBERING FRIENDS

We offer our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those within the CCHS community who have recently passed away. Their dedication to and support for CCHS have been invaluable, and their absence will be deeply felt.

Nancy Brassington
Martha Gallagher
Melady Kehm
Katherine (McAndrews)
Kissinger
Dr. Charles (Chuck) Rohrbeck
Alan Weisel



Marjorie and Alan Weisel at the 2022 Centre Furnace Mansion Restoration Phase I reception.



Melady Kehm and Joseph Griffin at the 2016 John H. Ziegler Historic Preservation Awards.

In Memoriam

Donations have been received in memory of the following:

Ted Taylor from:
Gretchen Leathers

Elwood and Aileen Homan from:
John and Lois Zimmerman
Sue and Kenneth Lower

Sibyl Barsky Grucci from:
Julia Kasdorf



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Your membership in the CCHS also makes the preservation possible for the Centre Furnace Mansion, Boogersburg School, and countless other explorations of our shared history and heritage – places that help us “get away” without even having to leave Centre County.

As we continue to schedule an engaging series of programs and events, we invite you to reconnect with the past and help preserve the beauty of the present through your membership. Your support means everything.

As our thanks to you for partnering with us on our mission to discover, explore, preserve, and interpret Centre County history, your membership benefits in CCHS include:

- 10% off CCHS publications (*Don't forget to mention that you are a member when purchasing books in our Museum Store. If purchasing books through our website, enter MEMBERS10 at the checkout.*)
- Lending privileges that allow you to check out books from the CCHS research library
- *Mansion Notes* Newsletter
- Advanced notification of upcoming programs via email

Join or renew at <https://centre-county-historical-society.square.site>, scan the QR code below, or fill out this form and send to CCHS, 1001 E. College Ave., State College, PA 16801 or call us at 814-234-4779. The annual membership period is January through December.

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