

Pennsylvania: The Cradle of Cable Television

By Patrick Parsons

While some people in Centre County were able to view broadcast television as early as 1949, most had to wait until 1951 when the community antenna – what we know today as cable television – began spreading out through the county. The story of the development of cable TV is one of geography, technology and entrepreneurial spirit, and Pennsylvania was at the very heart of that mix.

Television in the United States, unsurprisingly, came first to the big cities. Stations in New York City and Philadelphia, for example, began broadcasting just after the end of World War II. But just as TV was beginning to expand into smaller towns like Altoona and Harrisburg, the Federal Communications Commission in 1948 put a halt to the licensing of new stations. The Commission wished to study a host of technical issues associated with the national deployment of TV and instituted a freeze on the construction of new stations for four years.

In the interim, crafty TV enthusiasts found novel ways of capturing an existing signal. Across the country, people just at the edge of a receivable broadcast wave were building tall reception antennas and amplifying the weak signals. When successful, they would often run an antenna wire to a neighbor's home (sometimes at the request of the neighbor.) These early shared TV antennas were the nucleus of what would become a for-profit community antenna. And while the first verified examples of this kind of activity were reported in places like Oregon and Arkansas, the hot bed of shared, community antenna television (CATV) swiftly became eastern Pennsylvania and the coal mining towns situated just behind the mountains that blocked reception of TV channels from Philadelphia.

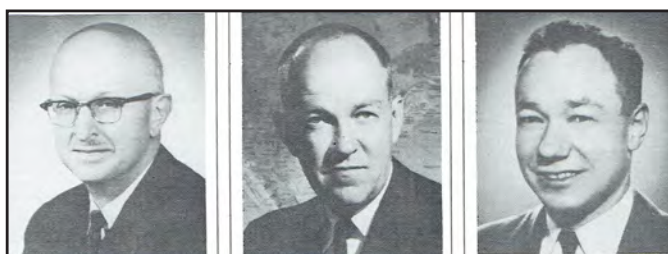
In Mahanoy City, for example, Luther Holt ran an electronics school and brought a TV line from an antenna on top of the nearby mountain into his school for instructional purposes. A similar antenna line fed a local bar, attracting customers for the Saturday night fights. Local businessmen saw an opportunity and by 1950 Mahanoy City had two companies providing television antenna service to local customers. Just down the road in Lansford, meanwhile, Robert Tarlton was organizing local investors to start his own CATV system, one that would help spark a new industry.

Tarlton was purchasing existing television equipment, which he then retrofitted for the specialty applications in his CATV system, from a supplier in Philadelphia. The supplier, Milton Jerrold Shapp, became curious about the large number of purchases and paid Tarlton an historic visit. Upon viewing the evolving city-wide antenna system, he decided that his company, Jerrold Electronics, could produce components for what he saw as an emerging industry and he converted his firm's product line to CATV purposes. Moreover, he began building CATV systems himself, as well as providing financing for others to do so.



Milton Shapp

Shapp leveraged the enthusiasm for TV and the region's mountainous topography to plant cable seeds across the state and by 1952 Pennsylvania boasted 60 percent of all the CATV systems in the country. By the mid-1950s, Jerrold Electronics had become the largest CATV equipment manufacturer and largest CATV system owner in the US. Many will remember Shapp not for his early contributions to cable television but for his subsequent political career as two-time governor of Pennsylvania.



HRB founders: George Haller, Richard Raymond and Walter Brown.

But while Jerrold was the nation's largest CATV equipment company, it was not the only such firm. One of its most significant competitors took shape in State College, beginning with the establishment in 1946 of the engineering firm, HRB. The company was created by a trio of Penn State University professors, recently out of the army: George Haller, Richard Raymond and Walter Brown. They specialized in research and development contracts for the military but also had an interest in television and as early as 1947 sought to obtain a local broadcast license. They were unsuccessful, perhaps as a result of the FCC freeze, and as an alternative constructed the area's first community antenna, locating it in Bellefonte in 1951. It carried one station, WJAC from Johnstown. Shortly after, they built another system for State College, operating both as Central Pennsylvania Corp. The original antenna for the State College operation reportedly was raised at Brown's home and later moved to the top of the water tower on the

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

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 Boogersburg 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 at <https://centre-county-historical-society.square.site/> or by simply sending in the form on the back of this newsletter.

Society members and others in the community are also invited to support these activities 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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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.

☞ Contact Us ☞

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CCHS Office Hours:

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

Research at the Centre Furnace Mansion:

Research requests can often be handled remotely by email. 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 emailing info@centrecountyhistory.org.

Centre Furnace Mansion Tours:

We are pleased to announce that the Centre Furnace Mansion has reopened for tours on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. by appointment. Call us at 814-234-4779 or schedule your tour online at CentreHistory.org.

- We will continue to follow CDC guidelines for mask wearing while indoors at the Centre Furnace Mansion.
- We are limiting the capacity of our tours for now for the safety of our staff and visitors by requiring that tours be pre-scheduled.
- Hand sanitizer will be readily available and encouraged upon entering.
- Public areas in the Mansion and restrooms will be cleaned beyond normal cleaning schedules.



Bellefonte, Beaver Farm, 1910

CCHS Sherm Lutz Collection 2001.24.24.0820

President's Corner

A Memorable Walk Into Local Aviation History

On the afternoon of June 1, I walked across a nondescript farm field. Normally, I would be trespassing, as the land in question is owned by Graymont, which operates the nearby limestone quarry, but I was with Drew Smith, who previously owned the land and continues to farm it, and Dave Grove, who had owned the Garbrick farm that was located at the far end of the field. I felt privileged as I was with the only two people who knew the detailed history of this field. We were northeast of Pleasant Gap, near the intersection of Route 64 north and Garbrick Road, on a field that once served as the second Bellefonte airfield.



Smith farm from the airfield.

Photo provided by Bob Hazelton.

Concrete remains of the hanger floor were visible in an overgrown area next to the field. Also found were the well and retaining wall—mute evidence to the airfield once visited by the most famous flyers of their day. Part way across the field I stopped and reflected on all that had happened there. It was one of those moments that I will always remember.

The first Bellefonte airfield was the Tom Beaver farm field near the present-day Bellefonte High School. In 1918, the Bellefonte area was selected as one of the stops for the U. S. Post Office to fly mail from New York to Cleveland and then on to Chicago. The airplanes of the day had a limited range and therefore an airport was needed as a refueling stop in central Pennsylvania. The airfield and these flying machines brought great excitement to the area, and the daring pilots became local heroes. And daring as those pilots were, flying the mail was a dangerous occupation. There were several crashes and some were fatal. Contributing factors were the rugged central Pennsylvania terrain, the fragile design of the early planes, poor weather, inadequate navigational tools, and the pressing need for the mail to go through regardless of conditions.

The crashes at the Tom Beaver field probably contributed to the idea of moving operations to another field further from town. Additionally, with nearby buildings and trees, Beaver's field was not ideal. Thus a second and larger field was sought. The land that was selected and leased in 1925 was northeast of Pleasant Gap on a large, 90-acre, square farm field that would allow pilots to land from any direction. It was located between present day Airport Road and Garbrick Road and a short distance from Route 64.

Even though it was closer to Pleasant Gap, the name Bellefonte was retained for this new airfield. However, changes were coming fast. In 1927, the Post Office switched to transporting the mail by private contractors rather than barnstormers. Improvements in aircraft technology resulted in larger and faster mail planes that could travel across Pennsylvania without needing to stop. General airplane activity was increasing and the airport entered a new era involving local enthusiasts. The new breed of aviators brought new life to the airfield. Along the way, the airfield was modernized with the latest lighting, radio, navigation, and a large hanger. The Bellefonte airport at Pleasant Gap became well known and definitely served a purpose for pilots crossing Pennsylvania.

Among the notable aviators who visited were Amelia Earhart, Wiley Post, Eddie Rickenbacker, Will Rogers, Admiral Richard Byrd, and Charles Lindbergh. On Amelia Earhart's first visit, in September 1928, one account stated that she was on the ground for only one hour to refuel and eat at the nearby Smith farmhouse, on land that bordered the airfield. Her passenger was George P. Putnam, a well-known New York publisher. They were working together on a book Amelia was writing and, in

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Director's Message

We regularly receive inquiries in the office about what, if any, grant or other funding may be available to private owners to rehabilitate or repair old houses and structures. While low interest loans and other historic preservation related incentives exist for homeowners depending on where you live, grants are typically only available for non-profit organizations for this purpose. There are, however, "Historic Preservation Tax Credits" (HPTCs) available in Pennsylvania and meant to provide incentive for business owners and developers to rehabilitate old houses and structures.

This program is administered by the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) and Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. HPTCs are available to "qualified taxpayers who will be completing the restoration of a qualified historic structure into an income producing property." There are many beautiful old and historic buildings throughout Centre County and we all benefit when they are preserved and continue to contribute to the historic character of our communities.

The Wolf Administration announced in July that 27 PA HPTC projects were awarded in Pennsylvania: <https://media.pa.gov/pages/PHMC.aspx> (click on the Wolf Administration article.) A nearby recipient this year was the Sears-Roebuck Building in nearby Altoona to be rehabilitated into an office building. In the 2019-2020 PA HPTC Allocation, the Gamble Mill in Bellefonte was awarded to update the restaurant and residential use of the historic grist mill. And the Glennland Building in State College was awarded to convert the early mid-century building into a hotel. In 2018, the Hoffer Building in Philipsburg was rehabilitated into commercial use and apartments through this program.

DCED Secretary Dennis M. Davin said, "The preservation of historic buildings in Pennsylvania is vital to simultaneously revitalize communities while still telling stories of the past. With this funding, the awardees can modernize and bring new life to these spaces—resulting in new opportunities in places to live, work and play in neighborhoods across the state." Well said.

Mary Sorensen

For more information about the PA HPTC Program, visit: <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc/>

Preservation Pennsylvania has an informative page about preservation funding here: <https://www.preservationpa.org/funding/>

Upcoming Programs and Events

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

Sunday, August 22, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

@ Poe Valley State Park

The Centre County Historical Society is pleased to partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and William Marcum, local historian and research authority on the Poe Valley CCC Camp to invite the public to attend a day-long program about the Civilian Conservation Corps.



An important part of this day will include time for attendees to share their personal stories with others. A collection of memorabilia will be on display for you to enjoy and you may

bring any mementos that you wish to share. Attendees will also learn how events brought about the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps program that included the construction of Poe Valley State Park. There will be an original rare film featuring the Poe Valley Camp shown during the event after lunch.

Enjoy a lunch inspired by authentic CCC menu boards. While there is no set cost for lunch, donations to help cover costs are appreciated.

Please RSVP for this program and indicate if you will be joining us for lunch.

RSVP online at CentreHistory.org or call (814) 234-4779.

About the Day:

- Folk singer and songwriter Van Wagner will kick off the day with CCC-themed music.
- Introduction to Camp S-63 activities including film clip of the CCC camp in operation, by Bill Marcum
- Period inspired lunch.
- *The History of Pennsylvania's State Parks*, by William Forrey
- CCC Uniforms - Living History Presentation, by Erik Ledbetter
- *African Americans in the Civilian Conservation Corps*, by Paul Fagley
- *Little Known Archaeology Digs of the CCC*, by Angela Wentling-Jaillet, Senior Archaeologist, Penn DOT
- Tim Morey, Natural Resource Specialist, DCNR
- There will be time for family members of the CCC boys to share their stories during and after their CCC enrollment.
- Visitors may visit the original CCC Camp site, including Officers Quarters and Forestry Quarters up the road on their way home.

While not currently required in Pennsylvania, in light of the increase in COVID-19 cases, we recommend that attendees wear a mask when not with family members and if physical distancing is difficult.

Open House at the Boegersburg School

Sunday, August 29, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
@ 1021 Fox Hill Road, State College



Whether you attended Boegersburg or another one-room school, or are simply interested in early school life in a one room school setting, we hope you will join us! Come any time in the afternoon from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., for an informal open house and learn about the school's history. You might even meet alumni of Boegersburg or hear stories from others who attended a one room school as a student.

This event is free and open to the public. The School-house will be open from 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. and is located at 1021 Fox Hill Road, State College, on the road to University Park Airport.



Music Under the Sycamore

Sunday, October 3, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Bring your picnic blankets or lawn chairs and join us for an afternoon under the historic Sycamore tree! The Centre County Historical Society is pleased to feature popular music group **Pure Cane Sugar**, along with light refreshments. Enjoy good eats, good people and good music in the beautiful bucolic setting of the Centre Furnace Mansion, the birthplace of the Pennsylvania State University.

Tickets may be purchased in advance online at CentreHistory.org or by stopping by the Centre Furnace Mansion.

The music starts at 4:00 p.m., please plan to arrive prior to 4:00 p.m. for the ease of parking and to check in. For more information, visit CentreHistory.org or call us at 814-234-4779. Proceeds from Music Under the Sycamore benefit the Centre County Historical Society to help maintain the historic sites in its care.

Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State

Presented by Roger Williams

Sunday, September 12, 2:00 p.m.

The Centre County Historical Society is pleased to announce the publication of *Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State*, written by CCHS Vice President Roger L. Williams and published by Penn State University Press.

Williams will present an illustrated talk on the subject by both Zoom and in-person with a 40 person capacity at Centre Lifelink EMS, 125 Puddintown Rd. in State College. If you would like to attend this presentation in person, we ask that you wear a mask and please call the CCHS office at 814-234-4779 to RSVP. For Zoom attendees, registration link will be available at CentreHistory.org in the "Events and Programs" section of the home page.

A Carlisle, Pa., resident, Frederick Watts rose to prominence during the nineteenth century as a lawyer, Supreme Court reporter, judge, and railroad company president, but his true interests lay in agricultural improvement and in raising the economic, social, and political standing of Pennsylvania's farmers. After being elected founding president of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society in 1851, he used his position to advocate for the establishment of an agricultural college that would employ science to improve farming practices. He secured the charter for the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania, which would later become The Pennsylvania State University, and served as president of its Board of Trustees from 1855-74.

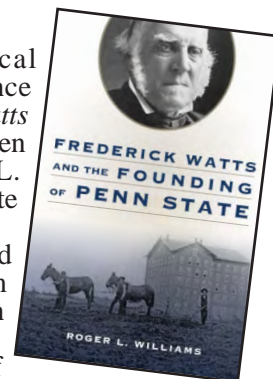
The book focuses on Watts's role in founding and leading Penn State through its formative years. Watts adroitly directed the school as it was sited, built, and financed, opening for students in 1859. He hired the brilliant Evan Pugh as founding president, who, with Watts and trustee Hugh McAllister of Bellefonte, quickly made it the first successful agricultural college in America.

But for all his success in launching the institution, Watts nearly brought it to the brink of closure after Pugh's untimely death in 1864 through a series of ruinous presidential appointments that led to an abandonment of the land-grant focus on agriculture and engineering.

In the last chapter of his public life, Watts was appointed U.S. commissioner of agriculture by President Ulysses S. Grant, serving from 1871-77.

Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State provides a critical biography of an nineteenth century "man of affairs" and gentleman farmer who, from 1850 until 1880, was by far the most outstanding figure in Pennsylvania agriculture.

Williams's book may be purchased through the online museum store at CentreHistory.org or at the Centre Furnace Mansion by calling 814-234-4779.



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.) and coordinated by Ford Risley.

Centre County Historian Influences Supreme Court's NIL Decision

Ron Smith, Ph.D., who with his wife Sue is a life member of the Centre County Historical Society, provided invaluable historical perspective to the U.S. Supreme Court that shaped its recent 9-0 decision permitting college athletes to be compensated for the use of their names, images, and likenesses (NIL).

Ron is emeritus professor of history at Penn State, having worked as a sports historian in the College of Health and Human Development over his long career. In addition to many other books and publications, he is the author of *The Myth of the Amateur: A History of College Athletic Scholarships* (University of Texas Press, 2021).



Ron Smith

Ron was asked by Jeffrey Kessler, lead counsel for Shawne Alston in the NCAA v. Alston case, to prepare an amicus brief based on the history of college athletics for Supreme Court case. After writing the draft, Ron sent it to five historians who also had questioned the "amateur" myth and they agreed to sign on.

In the first five pages of the Supreme Court decision, Ron's historical work from archives was cited to the detriment of the NCAA case against the former West Virginia University student, Alston. Ron and his colleagues' account was deeply influential in detailing the historical events that proved the myth of the amateur college athlete, particularly in football.

Ron's bylined story, *How Historians Convinced SCOTUS that the NCAA's Idea of Amateurism is a Myth*, was recently published by the History News Network and may be accessed via the History News Network website at <http://hnn.us/article/180685>.

Thank you to our Speakers!

The Centre County Historical Society is ever grateful for the speakers who provide meaningful, interesting programs for our membership and public. For spring and summer programs, we wish to extend our many thanks to:

David Lembeck, who presented *New Deal Post Office Murals in Central Pennsylvania* and took us on a tour of regional post office murals created as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal.

Bob Potter, who guided us on his journey to discover the history of the 28th Division Shrine in Boalsburg with: *Discovering WWI: From Boalsburg to France and Back*

Docents Corner



CFM Docents were excited to meet in person in June.

On July 11 we opened the Centre Furnace Mansion for tours after a long 16-month hiatus with the support and dedication of our docents who enthusiastically helped us to open the doors for visitors again. Their concerns about remembering scripts, dates, names and details about how to operate a charcoal blast iron furnace dissipated after the first few tours. It all came back!

Guests are delighted and appreciative to visit the Mansion again and we are delighted to see them.



CFM docents Deb Raykovitz and Lynn Royse

We thank our docents for their continued time and support during the past year in meetings, planning and finally getting our doors open again for tours during this challenging time. For re-opening efforts including tours and getting the Mansion spruced up before opening day, we give special thanks to

Elizabeth Dutton, Steve and Carol Gentry, Mary Harrigan, Karen Hazel, Gloria Nieweg, Deb Raykovitz, Dolores Rose, Lynn Royse, Joy Schon, Betsy Taylor, Bonnie Walter, Linda Witmer and volunteers from Just Serve who were a great help in getting the Mansion spruced up before opening day.

We hope that if you have guests visiting or would like to get out for a tour yourself, that you will join us some Sunday, Wednesday or Friday. Tours are by reservation at this time and you can visit our website for more information and schedule a tour at centrehistory.org/visit or calling us at 814-234-4779.



Just Serve Sisters

Garden Corner

The Centre Furnace Mansion Gardeners kicked off the garden season with zeal this year beginning with potting over 800 plants from the CFM Gardens or that were donated to help bring back the Plant Celebration in May. Nine vendors participated in the sale and eager shoppers showed up en masse. The chilly and damp day didn't dampen spirits, however. Everyone's planting, selling and shopping efforts made 2021 one of the most successful Plant Celebration sales ever.

Meanwhile in the gardens, inches of rain and abundant sunshine during the spring and early summer have been especially conducive to exuberant weeds amplified by rained-out garden days!



Top: CFM Gardeners, Bottom left: Baker Tilly service volunteers, Bottom right: the Rock Garden

With that, we extend extra loud cheers and great thanks to the CFM Gardeners and all who helped with the Plant Celebration and for much hard work in warm weather in the CFM gardens and grounds this summer:

Centre Furnace Mansion Garden Committee:

Susan Bowser, Mike Canich, Joyce Christini, Elizabeth Dutton, Susan Toby Evans, Katie Frieden-co-chair, Carol Gouty, Judy Heberling, Michael Husband, Chris Igo, Beverly Lipski-chair, Lou Mayer, Jo Merrell, Ruth Merritt, Carol Phillips, Sharon Phillips, Mark Pishak, Geri Reeve, Jan Villastrigo, Marty Warner, Steve Wheeler.

Plant Celebration volunteers:

Lucy Boyce, Michele Ebaugh, Rita Fodor, Lenore and Wayne Foster, Christine Gambino, Rachel Killoren Corp, Scott Heberling, Win and Pat Hock, Jeanie Kim, Deborah Meszaros, Ann Moellenbrock, Fran Nuhfer, Ellen Slingerland, Peter Sorensen, Roger Williams.

Organizations:

Baker Tilly, Just Serve, Penn State Master Gardeners, Boy Scout Troop #34 Bellefonte.

Vendors:

Notecards by Esther Del Rosso, Rose Franklin's Perennials, Meadowsweet Native Plant Farm, Deb's Flower Farm, The Rock Garden, Go Native Tree Farm, Shuey's Market, James Eisenstein, Common Ground Organic Farm

Archives

With the help of generous donors and a supportive committee, plans to move the CCHS Archival Collection to the Ice House building are under way. As the Ice House continues to be prepared for the Archives, a fire detection system and ductless air conditioning/heating unit will soon be installed. A floor plan for shelving and work space that will nearly double our linear shelf space has been completed as well as an inventory of needed archival housing. We have submitted a state PHMC Historical and Archival Records Care Grant (HARC) to fund archival shelving, housing (including boxes, folders, envelopes) and other supplies needed for the new archives space. We will know if we have received the grant in January and, if awarded, will have access to funds in May 2022.

Our objective for the coming year with this project is to complete preparation of the Ice House for installation of the archives in Summer 2022. With this move the archives will become more accessible to the public. We will expand our existing physical space and linear shelf space while addressing climate-control and security.

Our many thanks to the following donors to this project:

- Herlocher-Weisel Family Charitable Gift Fund, Alan Weisel
- Bellefonte Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution
- Centre County Genealogical Society

Thank you to volunteer committee members Lee Stout, Judy Heberling, Sue Kellerman, Jackie Esposito, and NYU Intern Priscilla Mariani for their insights and hours of planning, meetings and assistance with grant writing. And many thanks to Alan Popovich for his help with planning and preparing the Ice House ahead of fire detection and HVAC installation.

Special thanks to the Centre County Board of Commissioners, the Centre County Library & Historical Museum, PSU History Prof. Michael Milligan, and the Bellefonte Chapter of the DAR for writing letters of support for our recently submitted PHMC- HARC Grant.

For more information and/or if you would be interested in contributing to this much needed project, please contact Mary Sorensen at msorensen@centrefurnace.org or call 814-234-4779.



Just Serve Elders helped Johanna move the textile collection out of the Ice House loft.

A Memorable Walk

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Historical photo of Pleasant Gap Airport.
Photo provided by Bob Hazelton.

fact, they would later marry. After departing Bellefonte, Amelia and George went on to Pittsburgh where they escaped a crash upon landing. Another account of that same visit suggested they stayed overnight at the Smith farmhouse. As chronicled in the *Democratic Watchman*, Amelia Earhart visited Bellefonte four times, the first in September 1928 as previously noted. The second was in April 1929 when she ran into strong headwinds flying from New York to Cleveland. Being low on fuel, she put down at Bellefonte. The field manager, Forest M. Tanner, drove her to Bellefonte where she spent the night at the Bush House. During her visit, she dined with Bellefonte's mayor, Hardmann Harris, and visited a club meeting with schoolgirls who belonged to the Amelia Earhart Club of Girl Reserves. She also visited the Big Spring and came away impressed. Upon leaving, she said the airfield was excellent but advised that it could be better marked for flyers at high altitudes.

Her third visit was in September 1929. She was flying a larger six-passenger plane heading east. Her visit was short, on the ground for only half an hour for oil and fuel and a mechanical check. The fourth time Amelia stopped at Bellefonte was in December 1930. With her was George Putnam and a Miss Edna O'Brian of New York. They had lunch at the Penn Belle then went on to Cleveland. The

rumor was that Amelia and George were looking for a place to marry. They did not select Bellefonte, but they did marry shortly thereafter, on February 17, 1931.

Colonel Charles Lindbergh landed at the Bellefonte airfield on multiple occasions. One such landing was in December 1929, relative to his taking part in a search for a onetime flying companion, pilot Thomas P. Nelson. In the search, Lindbergh flew the New York to Cleveland path with no success. A hunter, just east of Cleveland, eventually found Nelson's body and wreckage.

Lindbergh also visited Bellefonte in early September 1930 with his wife, Anne Morrow, traveling from Detroit to New York. It was not a planned stop but one

COL. AND MRS. LINDBERGH LAND ON BELLEFONTE FIELD

Col. and Mrs. Charles E. Lindbergh made a brief stop at the Bellefonte aviation field, on Sunday afternoon, and only a few people were there to see them, and they were mostly tourists who had gone to the field on the chance of seeing a plane come in.

Employees at the field had no advance information of the coming of the distinguished couple. It was just 3:45 o'clock when a monoplane hove in view over Nittany mountain and settled gracefully on the field, the pilot turning his machine around and taxiing up to the buildings. Much to the surprise of the few people there Col. and Mrs. Lindbergh crawled out of the ship.

The Colonel had his gas and oil supply replenished while mechanics looked the ship over to see that everything was all right and in exactly twelve minutes from the time the ship landed the Colonel turned its nose into the wind and sailed aloft, continuing his trip west, with Cleveland as the probable destination of the famous flier and his wife.

Democratic Watchman,
August 30, 1929

forced by bad weather. They dined at Martin's restaurant and stayed overnight at the Brockerhoff Hotel. With his heroic 1927 flight across the Atlantic still fresh in the nation's consciousness, his visit certainly drew attention. But the taxi driver who took the famous couple from the airport to the Brockerhoff did not know who they were until the next morning—when someone told him that the Lindberghs were in town. When he picked them up the next morning for the return to the airport, the Lindberghs introduced themselves. After a two-hour delay due to fog, the couple resumed their journey to New York.

But the most dramatic event in the history of the Bellefonte Airfield was yet to unfold. In 1942, a military airplane with four-crew members crash landed on that field. Details will be provided in the next issue of *Mansion Notes*.

~ Bob Hazelton

Board News

We welcome two new members to the CCHS Board of Governors.

Ann Hamilton Taylor

CCHS member and volunteer Ann Taylor has worked in the field of distance education since 1991 with a focus on learning design and faculty development. Currently Ann serves in the Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Science as Assistant Dean for Distance Learning and Director of the John A. Dutton e-Education Institute. Ann has direct ties to Centre County and to the Centre Furnace Mansion with her Hamilton line ancestry. She has helped out with our volunteer receptions for a number of years and with the Stocking Stuffer. Her mother, Betsy Taylor, has been a long-time docent and volunteer as well and we are thankful for the Taylor family's dedication!



Betsy Taylor and
Ann Taylor

Jacqueline R. Esposito

Also a long time CCHS member and volunteer, Jackie Esposito is recently retired as Special Projects Librarian/Archivist at Penn State University Libraries Research Collections and Scholarly Communications. Jackie has been bringing Penn State students from her Archival Studies classes to CCHS to "learn about operating and managing a local historical society, to understand the mission of CCHS as it relates to Penn State history, and to share the rich resources available right in town." Several of Jackie's students have gone on to be dedicated interns at CCHS.



Jacqueline Esposito

We again welcome Ann and Jackie and look forward to working with you on the Board of Governors!

Pennsylvania: The Cradle of Cable Television

Continued from cover article

Penn State campus. In addition, while the group initially used and even served as a distributor for Shapp's equipment, in 1953 they created Community Engineering Corp. and began manufacturing and selling their own improved cable TV amplifiers in direct competition with Jerrold.



Photo provided by Patrick Parsons

Over the next few years, Haller and Raymond left the area to take new jobs and Brown, unfortunately, was killed in a drowning accident, but Community Engineering and the local CATV operations continued to grow. James Palmer, originally brought in as an HRB project engineer, took over the company in 1954. Two years later, it changed its name to C-COR and became one of the country's major suppliers of CATV equipment. It also ran the local cable TV systems, as Centre Video Corp., and they too prospered, expanding to serve customers in Boalsburg, Lemont, Port Matilda and Stormstown. By the late 1950s the systems offered up to five channels, bringing in stations including WJAC (Johnstown), WGAL (Lancaster), WFBG (later WTAJ, Altoona), and WNEP and WDAU (Scranton/Wilkes Barre). Others built local systems as well. There was The Millheim TV Transmission Line, The Philipsburg-Moshannon Valley TV Cable Company, and The Snow Shoe TV Company. Depending on the system, customers were charged about \$5 for installation and \$5 a month for service.

TV
Installation
and Service

RCA VICTOR "LIVING COLOR" TV

- ZENITH
- PHILCO
- ADMIRAL
- G. E.

MOTOROLA

- MAGNAVOX
- EMERSON
- SYLVANIA

TV RENTALS

"Skip" Smith's
STATE COLLEGE TV

AD 8-6021
232 S. ALLEN STREET

SUPPLIES
PARTS

Bellefonte - State College Telephone Directory: August 1958

but internet and TV streaming services to its many area customers, and it all started, in part, with neighbors just sharing a TV antenna.

In 1950, fewer than 2 percent of the homes in State College had a television set. By the mid-1960s, largely as a consequence of the expansion of cable, more than 90 percent of the homes in the county enjoyed daily television. Today, the cable brings not just hundreds of channels of television,

Exhibits

Poor Man's Silver - 2

The 2021 CCHS Exhibition Series features mini-exhibition *Poor Man's Silver - 2* a continuation of the 2018 exhibition by Dick Pencek. Pewter has long been prized as an alternative to silver. During the 17th and 18th centuries, pewter became popular for its utilitarian purposes but also for its decorative beauty and as works of art. Pewter would have been found in every household in the form of jugs, plates, buttons, tankards, wine cups, inkwells, candlesticks and spoons, just some of the many items for which it was used.



This exhibit features pewter objects that are less common but had a specific purpose such as a salt dish, lunch or dinner pail from France and a mug engraved for Hannibal Hamlin, vice president to Abraham Lincoln. Fifty beautiful objects are on display in the Mansion's Period Kitchen.

Thank you to Dick for sharing his pewter collection with us once again. Visit CentreHistory.org/visit for Mansion tour dates and times.

From the Archives



State College TV had a panel truck in the 1955 State College 4th of July parade. The telephone number on the truck is AD-6021. AD was the telephone exchange for State College. CCHS Places & Spaces Collection: 1998.PS.1921

We are hoping that you can help us with our *Town & Gown* magazine collection in the CCHS library. We are missing the following issues:

January 1966	October 1970	July 1978
March 1966	January 1971	August 1978
July 1966	July 1972	October 1978
November 1968	August 1972	
May 1969	September 1972	

If you have any of these issues and would be willing to donate them, we would love to have them! Also, if you are handy with Excel and would be interested in helping us catch up with indexing this collection, please contact Mary Sorensen at msorensen@centrefurnace.org or call at 814-234-4779.

Mansion Restoration

In May, June and July, the Centre Furnace Mansion has undergone the first phase of major restoration to replace its cedar shingle roof, paint the eaves and decorative corbels, and do repair work on its porches. The Historical Society is extremely grateful for the outpouring of support from members, friends, supporters, and granting organizations that have made this \$352,000 project possible. As this phase of the project concludes, the Society is planning the second phase for 2022 that will include painting the Mansion's brick exterior repairing and restoring the windows, shutters, and doors and performing additional deferred maintenance tasks.

We would like to extend a special thanks at this time to our general contractor, Rob Veronesi with Veronesi Building & Remodeling, Inc. and sub-contractors: Jeff Zook with Mid-State Roofing and Coating, Inc., and Aaron Biega with Homewrights Construction, LLC

Everything is turning out beautifully. The impressive cedar shingle roof, copper gutter system and copper flashing stand out from as far as College Avenue. The meticulously crafted copper standing seam roofs on the balconied porch and back porch near the kitchen garden are exquisite and harken traditional building techniques. The carpentry work to restore the balconied porch, repair the back porch and restore the front balcony is splendid. The painting of the Mansion's eaves and detailed brackets is lovely and makes these elements stand out as they should. The patience and skill involved in all of these components were incredible and we are ever grateful for this work!



Clockwise from upper left: Balconied porch restoration with copper roof; view of the historic Sycamore from the balconied porch; front balcony and roof restoration; back porch with new copper standing seam roof and gutter system.

Thank you to the Mansion Restoration Fund donors:

Donations received April 28 - August 5, 2021.

Joyce Adgate
Mrs. Betty Arnold
Dr. & Mrs. Gert Aron
Richard Barrickman
Mary Lou Bennett
Mr. & Mrs. R. Thomas Berner
Anita Genger & Eric Boeldt
Ned & Inga Book
Ian Boswell
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Carline
Dr. Richard Carlson & Lori Forlizzi
Mary Anne Claar
John Collins
Mr. and Mrs. Dave DeWalle
Mr. & Mrs. John Diercks
Richard DiMarcello
Mr. & Mrs. David Dix
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Dunn
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Kathryn Ferrigno
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Dr. Richard B Gidez
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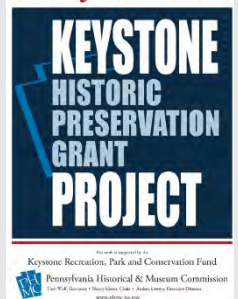
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Mrs. Howard Wise
Mr. & Mrs. David Witmer

Professional services donated by

Alan Popovich-APArchitects, Bill Marcum-Martech Associates Inc., Sunbelt Rentals

*Preserving
Pennsylvania's Past*

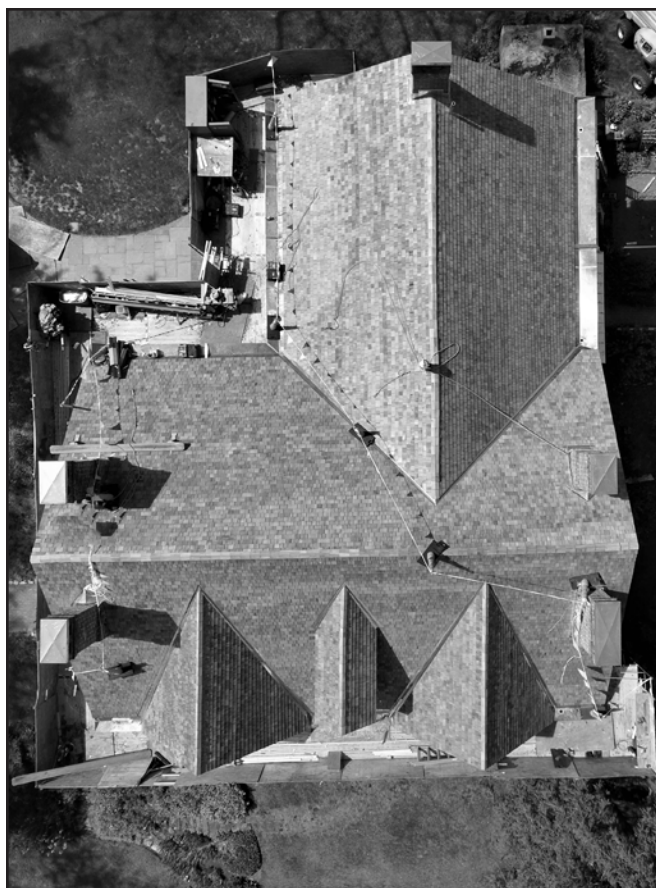


**THE HAMER
FOUNDATION**

*The Palmer
Foundation*



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



Aerial view of the cedar shingle roof taken in May by Michael Immel.

In Memoriam ***Remembering Friends***

CCHS Life Member and former Board Member, Bob Gruver recently passed away after celebrating his 100th birthday this spring. Bob and his family have been supportive to CCHS over many years in hands-on kinds of ways. In the 1990's, as an avid photographer, Bob was John Zeigler's partner in the early days of the Historic Preservation Awards program when they would traverse the county in search of interesting projects and people that embodied historic preservation in Centre County. When planning began for the landscapes at Centre Furnace Mansion and the Boogersburg School, Bob was instrumental in identifying and indexing native species at both sites and led volunteers to help in the early efforts to "tame" the landscapes. His gentle nature, curiosity and love of nature and native plants were true gifts.



Bob Gruver working at Boogersburg School in 2008.

Thank You

We are thankful for the many things that people do every day to help out with CCHS. Whether through service, donated items, or providing program support. We thank the following for their contributions:

Mimi Barash Coppersmith – generous donation of advertorial space in the August *Town & Gown*

Baker Tilly – their team's enthusiastic service in the CFM Gardens

Penn State Libraries, Sue Kellerman and Bethann Rea for facilitating the digitization of the Moses Thompson map and a framed image of John Hamilton's birth home.

Kari & Tom Reyburn – for technical support

Michael Immel – amazing drone photos of the Mansion's roof taken during construction.

Albert Jarrett – created a four-sided tabletop panel display frame.

Town & Gown donations of back issues:

Virginia Brickwedde

Richard Porter

Just Serve – service organization for regularly helping in the gardens and grounds and where ever needed!

Brian Sedgwick – working with Just Serve to replace the downspout connectors.



Brian Sedgwick working with the Just Serve Elders.

Membership

Thank you to our new and renewing members for your support of the Centre County Historical Society. Memberships received April 28-August 5, 2021.

New Members

Marti Franklin Duffy
Bonnie Henderson
Neil & Joanie Kimerer
Jay & Joyce Rush
Pattee Russell-Curry
Mary Jane & William Wild
Andrew Yablonsky

Renewing Members

Jane Andrews
Ronald & Hope Coder
Louis & Patricia Delattre
James & Gay Dunne
Melissa Hancock
Caryl Kehoe
Carolyn & Stan Lembeck
Harvey & Glenda Manbeck
Deborah Meszaros
Ann & George Moellenbrock
Wendy Snetsinger
Janet Taylor
Paul & Sally Wangsness

The Centre County Historical Society is grateful for grant support through:

The Palmer Foundation

The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau, 2021 Tourism Grant.





CENTRE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CENTRE FURNACE MANSION

1001 East College Avenue

State College, PA 16801

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
State College, PA
Permit No. 95

Return Service Requested

Membership

New members welcome anytime.

- ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal
- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$35 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward | \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ironmaster | \$1500 |
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Address _____

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- ☐ I wish to help cut down on mailing costs and help the environment. Please send my newsletters via e-mail!
- ☐ I would like my membership / donation to remain anonymous.

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>, 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.

