



HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINDOWS TO THE PAST... *The Official Newsletter of the Hamburg Area Historical Society*

Volume 22, Issue 4

"Preserving Our Past For The Future"

Fall 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall is a wonderful time of the year to get out and savor the cooler, colorful days and foliage. Throw in some country festivals, pumpkins, gourds, hayrides and corn mazes and there's fun for all ages.

Our forebears used this time to stock up on wood for heating homes, hay for livestock to get them through the barren winter, and they canned food to get through to the next growing season.

In many ways, we have it much easier by depending on weekly shopping trips to the grocery store. But we all know what happened during the COVID restrictions – supply interruptions and hoarding of goods. The lifestyle we take for granted can quickly disappear.

Spend time with your older family members and learn the skills that kept them self-sufficient. Learn how to can fruits and vegetables, and forage for natural edibles growing in plain sight. Basic skills like sewing, cooking without frozen or chemically preserved ingredients, woodworking, hunting and processing the meat are just a few of the skills that are fast becoming lost to our young adults.

Our older generations lived through some tough times. We have been spoiled and very lucky to have had it much easier. Let's preserve these valuable skills for future generations. Our new building might be just the place to introduce some old skills to some younger generations.

We have had the good fortune to have started negotiations with a financial institution that is very interested in helping us get our building under construction. Final papers have not been signed yet, but it is looking very promising. As things develop and are finalized, we will keep you all informed.

Deb Billman, president

NEW MEMBERS

Ben Zettlemoyer, Ephrata, PA
Kevin Grim, Conshohocken, PA

An updated list of donors to our Building Fund will be printed in our Winter 2024 issue.

COMING EVENTS

November 2 – Dale Graff, "Beyond Boundaries: Shadow War and Intelligence Missions." Military and intelligence activities as a civilian physicist with the Dept. of Defense.

December 7 - Christmas party, 7 p.m. at the Hamburg Bible Church on Port Clinton Ave. We suggest you bring some home-baked cookies to share, and a small wrapped gift. Parcels are passed around in a circle, and at a signal, they stop and people get to keep whatever they are holding. We don't expect a gift from everyone, that's okay, but the more the merrier.

January – *We do not have a meeting in Jan.*

February 2, 2024 – Show and Tell. People bring items of local historical interest. This time, we'd like to feature items made at a local iron foundry. Of course, other things will be welcome as well.

Our regular meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in the LGI room of the High School unless otherwise scheduled. No meetings in January or the summer months when school is not open.

SAVE THOSE REDNER'S TAPES

Use your Redner's Rewards card when you shop at that market, and save the *entire* register tape for us. Bring them to a meeting or drop them off at our museum. We send them in and receive a one percent "reward" from that company. This has been quite a help in paying our bills.

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SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Once again, our Historical Society has awarded a \$100 scholarship to a graduating senior at Hamburg Area High School who had an outstanding grade in social studies/history. This year it went to Colin Reppert. He also gets a year's membership in our Historical Society.

PARKING BECOMES A PROBLEM

When we bought the lot at 4th and Franklin Sts. in 2019, it was already partly paved as a parking area for the church that stood there (and burned down in 2018). Since then, people have begun to rely on it as a free parking area. For a time, we did post No Trespassing signs, but they disappeared. Assuming that the vehicles that park there belong to people who live nearby, we have allowed this parking to continue, wanting to be a good neighbor. However, some of those people have abused the privilege, by leaving litter and trash on the lot, by working on their cars there, and other activities that we can't allow. Thus, we are going to post the lot as a no parking area, as well as no trespassing.

We have allowed the public to park there for activities such as the Hamburger Festival, when spaces near the center of town are hard to find, and also for the people attending a nearby church.

Parking on the lot will soon be prohibited altogether, when any building activities begin.

WE KEEP PUBLISHING GOOD BOOKS

Our Historical Society began putting out quality books way back in 2002, with our first book on local history. That one helped pay off the mortgage on our stone house. Since then, we have published several other books, quite a good source of income. They are listed on the Membership Renewal insert, in case you are interested. *Hint* - maybe someone on your Christmas list would enjoy the history and memories found in one or more of those books.

Have you seen that beautiful "Bottle Book" that we published last year, put together by Phil Kistler and filled with great photos of a the amazing variety of old bottles that held the beer, medicine and other necessities of long ago? These bottles are very collectible, and their histories are covered in that book, priced at \$20 – a great source of information for collectors.

Now, Phil is working on another book, "Dairies and Ice Cream Manufacturers," many pages of great memories and photos. The farms in this area produced the dairy products we grew up on. Milk in glass bottles was delivered to our doors before the sun came up. We could get local ice cream at dozens of places. Cream came in all sizes, from tiny bottles placed beside your coffee cup, to pints and quarts for making desserts. When empty, these bottles were returned to the dairies, but some never made it that far, and are now prized collectibles. The designs and shapes of the bottles changed frequently, until they finally were phased out in favor of single-use paper and plastic containers. This book will be available soon. It will bring back memories, and send you to the store for ice cream!

Our popular cookbook is in its *fifth printing*, and will soon be available again.

THOSE PRECIOUS YEARBOOKS

Since 1943, students at Hamburg High School and Hamburg Area High School have purchased yearbooks to preserve their memories of school days and the friends they knew. Some of them got people to autograph those pages, and some kept them in pristine condition.

Over the years, downsizing efforts brought quite a few of those Pinnacle yearbooks to our door. We keep a reference shelf of them at our museum, complete from 1943 to 1994, plus a scattering of years from 1997 to 2006. We also have the Middle School "Talon" for 1998 to 2001.

The duplicate issues that we are given are for sale for \$5 apiece. Here is a list of what we presently have for sale, and this list will be updated every year or so.

1943	1963	1979
1944	1965	1980
1945	1966	1981
1946	1967	1982
1947	1968	1983
1948	1969	1987
1949	1970	1988
1950	1971	1994
1953	1973	2001
1959	1975	2002
1962	1976	2003
		2005

To purchase any of these, stop in at the museum on a Sunday afternoon, or call any of our officers or board members. We also sell them at our fund-raising events. If you have any Pinnacles to donate, the same directions apply.

These books sure bring back memories. The hair-dos, the sports, the teaching staff, the clubs and activities..... Smiles and some tears.

MYSTERY PHOTO

We are reprinting the Mystery Photo from the last issue, so that you can view it again. Calling in with an answer were Denny Bowers and David McFall. They identified it as the float we made and entered in the King Frost Parade in 2003 – a model of the old Pennsylvania Railroad Station that used to be at State and 2nd Street in Hamburg. Pictured is the crew that worked on the float. Left to right, Ken Fryer, Norman Rubright, Donny Billman, Janet Barr, Buck Holtzman, and Dick Gerner. A few other members helped too, but aren't in the photo.

The station had lights in the windows, snow on the roof, and some passengers waiting for a train. After the parade, it was put into storage, but later mysteriously disappeared, along with the float built in 2004 of the Hamburg Public Library. We include here 2 other photos, to give a good idea of why we were so proud of that float.

As the float banner says, that historic station stood by the tracks from 1885 to 1968. Many people now say they wish it had been preserved, but in the 1960s it stood empty and much deteriorated, no funds available to save it. During WWII it was a USO center, and for a time a family lived in an apartment upstairs, and there also had been a restaurant in the building. Had there been a Hamburg Area Historical Society in 1968, that building might have been saved.



Reprint of Mystery Photo from the Summer Issue



Above are two other views of the 2003 float



THIS is our new Mystery Photo. If you know what, where or when, please call 610-488-1817. Leave a message, and you will get a call back.

THE HAMBURGER FESTIVAL

This year's Hamburger Festival was blessed with great weather. It was sunny but not too hot, and not humid. It was not too windy, although a little breeze swept through our stands a few times, flipping our book pages and disturbing some of the jewelry display. The crowds were there, eager to shop and hungry for the burgers and other treats available along State Street and 3rd and 4th Streets. Our stands did very well.

Very early, our crew brings the canopies, games, tables etc. to our traditional location on North Third across from the Post Office. They set up the canopies, which provide welcome shade all day. The Dime Toss is set up, and the little Fish Pond is filled with water. A wide selection of stuffed toys (prizes) is displayed on a table. We're proud of our games, a bit of fun for all ages, and lots of prizes. Our sales table includes our history books and other publications, old Pinnacles, and King Frost badges. We have newsletters and membership forms to hand out.

Friends and customers stop by. The passing parade of people is always interesting. We read tee shirt slogans, see cute babies and pampered pets, wild hair colors, lots of hamburger hats and unique outfits. And all the time, we are waiting on people, and hopefully attracting some new members. We are fortunate to be close to the stage that features great music all day – country, folk, and oldies - that makes us want to dance or sing along.

Our used jewelry sale owes its success to all the donations, and then the huge job that Barbara and Dale Graff and their helpers do to get this bounty ready to display and sell. They work at it for weeks. The purses have their own table, and this year there was an impressive selection of those.

At the end of the day there is the valiant crew – bless them! – that packs everything up, takes down the canopies and tables, and puts it all away. A percentage of our income that day is given to Our Town Foundation, which does a fantastic job of planning and managing this festival. This is one of our main fundraisers. Thank you to everyone who pitched in to help.



A Little Fisherman

OUR DAY AT THE WESTY

It was a good idea! As a fund-raiser, we scheduled Wednesday, September 27 for the day our organization would get a percentage of the take at The Westy, that popular eatery in West Hamburg, if they showed the “ticket” we printed in our last newsletter. Well, a lot of hungry people did just that, and we were given \$347.50 from The Westy. We thank them for that. And we didn't even have to do the dishes !

ENDURING TREES

By Dale Graff

As this country was explored, trees were seen as strictly utilitarian for building houses, burning for warmth and cooking, or destroyed to create farmland. At one time the local Blue Mountain was totally stripped of trees to provide fuel for smelting iron ore at Windsor Furnace. But trees are important for more than their utility. They provide shade from a blistering sun and habitat for birds, animals, flora and fauna. They are necessary for ecological balance, watershed preservation and biodiversity. Although trees have historic and practical significance for us, they have personal relevance as children climbing and falling from them, gathering nuts or apples, and playing hide and seek games.

Trees have symbolic and emotional significance as presented through music and poetry. Emotions associated with trees such as “weeping willow” and a “lonesome pine” resonate with our feelings of sadness and nostalgia. The poem *Trees* reminds us of the beauty of trees and their link with the mysteries of creation; *Woodsman, Spare That Tree!* is nostalgic with a hint of conservation awareness. A banyan (Badhi) tree inspired the Buddha; oak trees were central to Druid cosmology as was the spiritual oak tree for the Lenni Lenape (Lenape) near Oley, PA that still survives. The metaphysical “Tree of Life” symbolizes a connection between “the above” and “the below” with spiritual associations.

We do not need to travel far to observe trees that symbolize endurance and that can resonate with personal qualities. The huge sycamore and oak trees that border the Hamburg Community Park can stir up important memories and provide inspiration. The word sycamore derives from a Greek word associated with fig trees symbolizing love and fertility. Oak is an Old English word symbolizing strength. Oak and sycamore trees are some of the oldest and largest deciduous trees on earth and indigenous to Europe and North America.

Perhaps we did not think about these trees years ago when we stood under them or sat on benches with companions while focused on the softball or soccer game action on the playing field. When we revisit the park and closely observe these huge trees that were probably planted around 1930 when the park was established, we may be attracted to the artistic quality of their speckled patterns or their art-like appearance, or recall some important personal meaning. The sycamore's gnarled, distorted and rugged lower bark suggests endurance; the weathering of many storms. When the upper bark peels off, patches of white, muted yellow, tan and pale green are revealed. The smooth branches may also appear white or grey as if covered by snow, adding stark contrast to the scene. The sycamore's uplifting "arms" present a protective sense, a feeling of connections with something not visible. The rows of oaks with their uniform appearances are comforting and stabilizing, complementing the irregular shapes of the sycamore bark. Their different appearances remind us of nature's tendency toward co-existing and unity.

We are familiar with the acorns of oak trees as edible for animals and people and the hardwood having many purposes. The sycamore (buttonwood) produces pods resembling a small ball with seeds, not recommended as food for people or animals, and its softer wood used in carpentry.

The sycamore seed balls float easily on water to disperse the trees as they prefer to grow in moist soil but will thrive in other types. Oak trees deposit their seeds on the ground for animals to disperse. Sycamore and oak can live hundreds of years with hollowed trunks used by animals or people for shelter or fashioned into canoes by Native Americans.

These sentinels resemble time travelers, connecting the past with the present, reminding us of our enduring travel through time.



Trees at the Hamburg Community Park

TREES

By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



HOUSE SITTERS NEEDED

We have a museum filled with interesting artifacts, great photos, books and information for research and enjoyment. Visitors come with a definite goal sometimes, and others just drop in to see what we're about. We have much to show them. Of course, right now it is a bit crowded and cluttered, but they still can enjoy looking around. One day soon we hope to have a large, well-organized space in which to house our collection.

This means we need to have our doors open to those visitors. At present, we try to be open each Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Please consider pairing up with a friend to take a Sunday now and then to "house sit." It is a simple job, anyone can do it. If you want to pair up with someone who has done it before, to learn the ropes, that can easily be arranged. Please call Pat at 610-488-1817 to volunteer.

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Our annual membership dues is \$25 per household.

Our Museum at 102 State Street is open each Sunday afternoon, except holidays, from 1 to 4 p.m. We are proud of our large collection of photos and newspaper clippings, books on historical subjects, yearbooks, histories of towns and churches, and 100 years of *The Hamburg Item* newspapers. We have artifacts of all kinds to pique your interest. Come and browse to your heart's content. Admission is free.

Check out our Memorial Brick Walkway in front of the Museum. Memorial bricks may be ordered at any time, with any names you want, limited to three lines of print. Order forms are available at the Museum, or call 610-488-1817.

Our various books may be purchased at the Museum.

Hamburg Area 1752-1852

Hamburg Area 1850-2000

In Our Neck of the Woods (2nd printing)

Home Cooking and Eating Out (5th printing)

The Bottle Book

Bicentennial History Book (1976)

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Newsletter: Janet Barr (editor), Dale Graff, Barbara Graff, Pat Pitkin, Brian Riegel

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