



HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Volume 21, Issue 4

"Preserving Our Past For The Future"

Fall 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we get closer to breaking ground for the new museum, we have been receiving more memorabilia and artifacts from individuals and families hoping their loved one's treasures and memories will not be forgotten. One such donor recently was the estate of Charles W. Grim.

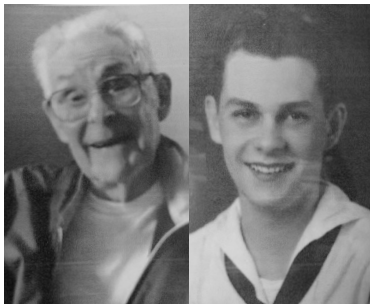
Charles was born in Hamburg to parents Maurice and Mabel (Potteiger) Grim. His grandfather William H. Grim started Grim's Music Store on S. 4th Street. Most of us remember it more recently as Stein's Pet Shop. The Grim Music Store sign still remains on the building.

Charles graduated from Hamburg High School in 1940 and went on to join the Navy. He served aboard the USS Argonne in WWII and was present when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Prior to his passing at the age of 101, he was one of the last few survivors of the attack.

Charles generously donated two large containers of personal items and WWII information and books to his hometown. The items will be a treasured part of our military display. He was just one of many people that preserved our history and hometown representation in world events.

The Hamburg area had many men and women that sacrificed their youth, and sometimes their lives, so that our freedom was secured. As Veteran's Day is just around the corner, when we honor those that served, let us never forget the sacrifices of previous generations, as well as current military personnel, who made our country and the world safer. Don't ever take it for granted, don't ever let it be lost.

Deb Billman, President



In Memory Of

Charles W. Grim

NOTE:

The Membership Renewal Form
is an insert in this issue. **RENEW for 2025.**
Only \$25 per household

COMING EVENTS:

Our regular meetings are held at the High School, in the LGI room unless otherwise noted. They are on the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., when school is open. After a brief meeting, there is a program of local and historical interest. Free to all. Come and bring a friend.

November 7 – Randy Wenhold will give an interesting program on glassware, especially patterned glassware before 1920, and carnival and depression glass. Not a certified appraiser, but he will be glad to look at pieces brought to the meeting.

December 5 – Our annual Christmas Party, at the Hamburg Bible Church on Port Clinton Avenue. There will be fun and refreshments, and plenty of holiday spirit. **Bring a favorite tree ornament** for show and tell. Optional - bring a small gift to participate in the "left/right" game.

January 2025 – No meeting in January

February 6 – Our February program is usually Show and Tell, always popular and informative.

NEW MEMBERS

Stephen Cashman, Hamburg
Ronald Keeney, Mechanicsburg
Roy and Darlene Berstler, Hamburg
Betty Gilbert, Hamburg
Allen and Dawn Stetzler, Hamburg

In this issue:

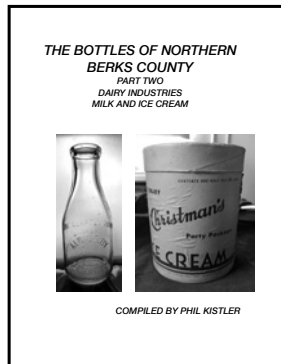
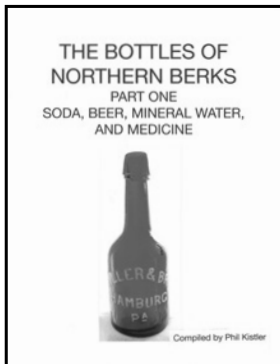
Our new Bottle Book	Pg. 2
Mystery Photo	Pg.3
Ground Cellars	Pg. 3-4
Gettysburg Trip	Pg. 5
Membership Renewal Form	Insert

OUR NEW BOTTLE BOOK

If ever there was a subject with mouth-watering memories, it is the dairy industry. Our latest book covers that local subject beautifully. Not only does it contain a comprehensive collection of milk bottle photos, it also includes the histories of those dairies. More pictures illustrate the delivery trucks, workers, and other products of the dairy business.

Ice cream! We all remember the popular places we could stop for a cone, milkshake or dish of our favorite flavor, and maybe even play a game of miniature golf. The book features ads that list the locations and the products they offered.

This book, compiled by Phil Kistler, will be a great addition to your personal library. It costs \$35 per copy, but we have a special offer – if you buy our first bottle book, *The Bottles of Northern Berks* (featuring soda, beer and medicine bottles) along with this second bottle book (featuring dairy bottles etc.) you get them both for \$50. They are available at our museum, or by calling any of our officers (see them listed on the back page of this Newsletter).



A GREAT HAMBURGER FESTIVAL

Our Historical Society had another successful fundraiser, taking part in the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival, put on by Our Town Foundation. Our stand, on N. 3rd Street, did great because of generous donations, helpful volunteers, and customers. We always acknowledge that our items are donated.

We begin the day early by setting up canopies, and tables and displays are quickly arranged. We have games for children and adults (a dime toss and a fish pond, prizes of stuffed toys), and a sales table featuring our published history books and other items. Very popular this year were old Pinnacle yearbooks. We distributed information about our museum and activities. Many people love to talk about history!

The jewelry area included purses and jewelry boxes, as well as jewelry of every description for men, women and children – all donated by thoughtful

and caring people. New and popular this year were large belt buckles. This stand, as always, did very well.

The weather continued to be fine until just before closing when it began to drizzle. With everyone clearing and loading, things were quickly packed away to await the next event. Our profit for the day was over \$2,500.



Deb Billman and Janet Barr at Hamburger Festival



Unusual old Belt Buckles were for sale

BOOKS MAKE GREAT GIFTS

Now it's getting to that time of year when we are making out a gift list. The variety of books we have published over the years could help you with that task. We have several excellent books on local history that feature rare and wonderful photographs and things you never knew about our area. And then there is our popular cookbook, which is in its fifth printing, full of recipes and photos of old eateries and ads that make your mouth water. We have a book on a local baseball star, and also one about a local hero who was awarded the military Medal of Honor. A collection of stories of the people and events who made our area unique is "In Our Neck of the Woods". Our two newest books, the "bottle book" and the "dairy book," will stir memories and also appeal to collectors. We have a variety of old Pinnacle yearbooks for sale at \$5 apiece. All books are available at our museum, or by ordering them on the **Membership Renewal insert** in this issue.

MYSTERY PHOTO

Callers who recognized the girls in our previous Mystery Photo were Richard Stine, Denny Bowers, Sylvia Summons, Judy McFall Kyle, Elaine Spatz, and Scott Lakits. They knew most or all of the members of Girl Scout Troop #25 in Hamburg, from the late 1940s and early 1950s, and knew they all graduated from HHS in 1952. Pictured were Ruth Dreibelbis Lakits, Pauline Kershner Madeira, Margaret Lengel Heller, Nancy Kauffman Kramer, Janet Brownmiller Barr, Marie Piacine, Dawn Dunkle Daberry, Marlene Rumberger Holtzman, and Ruth Boltz Emhardt. A few other troop members were not

pictured. Some of the troop leaders over the years were Mrs. Piacine, Johnnie Schappell, Kate Burkey, Peg Schumo, and Mrs. Kaag. Although many of their activities centered on nature, hiking and other skills, one of the highlights was a trip to Ocean City in 1950, where they just happened to stay at the same little hotel as Robin Roberts and other Phillies stars!

Now, can you identify this old scene, pictured below? It looks much the same today, although with more cars and fewer poles! Call 610-488-1817 and leave a message. You will get a call back. We love your input on these Mystery Photos – it's history !!

Mystery Photo



DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD

By Dale E. Graff

A few months ago I began a search for ground cellars. There had to be a few remaining in the nearby countryside, but where were they? I wanted to find one and, after many decades, descend into the underworld of this man-made cave. They were usually built near old farmhouses and provided a safe place for short-term storage of perishable food like butter, cheese, fruit and vegetables that needed to be kept cool during hot summers. A ground cellar was also a place to be briefly refreshed in misty cool air during the stifling heat of August afternoons. During the winter, ground cellars provided protection for root vegetables, cabbages, turnips and other food. Farm life depended on them until the next growing season.

Not every farm had a ground cellar, since cool portions of the below-ground basements or blocks of ice in cabinet-size chests may have been available for cooling. These below-ground basements provided sufficient protection in winter for root vegetables and potatoes for food and seedlings during the next potato planting in the spring.

Eventually, refrigeration followed the electric lines that slowly stretched across the landscape. By the 1930s, there was less need for ground cellars, as most rural areas had become electrified. When heating shifted from fireplaces and wood or coal stoves to furnaces, basements became too

warm for food storage, and ground cellars continued to be active in many areas. However they, along with many other pre-electric era items, slipped into fading memories and historical articles.

Indigenous people stored food in caves and constructed underground cavities for food preservation. In early Greek and Roman times, wine was stored underground. The method of storing food underground was adapted by Europeans who brought the design to America.

A typical ground cellar was constructed by digging a large cavity, erecting a half-cylindrical structure in the dugout space, and covering it with earth to form a dome-like mound. Inside floor dimensions were about 8 x 12 feet, with a ceiling height of six or seven feet at the center. A small pipe in the top center of the ceiling provided ventilation, and a small pipe in a corner on the floor drained condensing moisture into a lower outside area or into a cistern. The ground cellar's wall was built with stone or brick, and lined with a cement-like substance. Temperature varied from 50°F to 60°F year-round.

My sister Joanne and I grew up on a farm in Windsor Township where electric lines had not been installed along our long lane. We relied on an ice chest and our ground cellar for keeping food cool during the summertime. One of our chores was to "fetch" something from the ground cellar for the dinner table. This meant descending into the ground cellar and, with a slight stretch of imagination, into

the underworld, into the mysteries of deep, dark places, into something subterranean, perhaps a hint of entering into the mysteries of the subconscious mind. Sometimes our imagination was pragmatic. During World War II, we visualized running toward the ground cellar to seek shelter from bombs dropped by enemy aircraft.

Pulling hard on a heavy wooden door opened the ground cellar at its entrance. When looking down into the dark void, it was difficult to see the ten slippery stone steps that dropped into the cool air, thick with mist, air that sometimes seemed like wispy fog. As our eyes adjusted to the faint light from the open doorway high above us, we could dimly see the vegetables lined up on the low shelf along the wall. After placing them in a basket, we carefully stepped up the narrow, wet steps and slowly returned into the blinding light of a cloudless summer day.

That journey, that adventure into the underworld, was over until the next day.

Recollections from those early days on that Windsor Township farm motivated me to find a ground cellar, to relive the descent into imagination. Perhaps my readings many years later of the Greek classic adventures, with their theme of long arduous journeys and lessons learned from them, or maybe the symbolic winter/spring cycles of Persephone descending into the underworld for renewal, also fueled my search for them.

Driving slowly along country roads, I looked for anything near an old farmhouse that resembled a mound with a small pipe on top. Its entrance door would be difficult to spot, since it probably faced the house. I stayed on public roads and did not enter any private lanes. Months passed as I traveled through the nearby townships. Prior to my search I was aware of several nearby ground cellars, but they were small and not accessible. Today, many ground cellars are abandoned; some have either collapsed, have been filled with debris, or have been bulldozed away.

I could only find two places with ground cellar-style doors near old homesteads. They were built into a steep hill or cliff that probably led to a carved-out space, but without steps or ground cellar structure. I also found the remnants of a ground cellar near the parking lot of an automotive dealership just south of Hamburg, but it could not be entered and was filled with debris.

One day, while driving slowly along Old Route 22, I thought I glimpsed that telltale mound at an old farmhouse. I had driven past this location for many years and had not noticed it. A man was in the yard near the mound. I stopped to investigate. That man was the property owner, Mark Kauffman. That grass- and flower-covered mound was a ground cellar! Mark opened the door to his ground cellar and led the way down slippery steps into its interior. After many decades, I once again entered into the subterranean world of a cool ground cellar and relived my nearly-forgotten subconscious memories of them.

Mark's ground cellar was constructed about 100 years ago when the farmhouse was built. It is in great condition

and is exactly like the one I recall from my Windsor Township childhood. It is probably one of the few remaining intact local ground cellars and should have historic recognition. This article will assure that Mark's ground cellar, a unique structure from bygone days, will be a permanent part of our area's history.

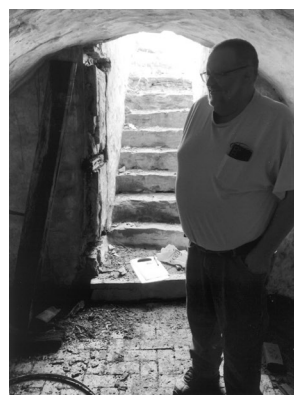
Perhaps, as some of the mythological stories illustrate, something sought may not be far away, but is close to home. All we need to do is persevere, continue searching with focus on the goal, and keep looking for it. Then we will find it.

Finding this ground cellar was a surprise, but even more surprising – it was only a mile from my home!

--- *With appreciation of Mark Kauffman, for article assistance.*



Ground cellar entrance



Mark Kauffman inside ground cellar

HAVE YOU VISITED THE MUSEUM LATELY?

Even though it is crowded and no longer as organized as we would like, our museum has a lot to offer. Wherever you turn, there are interesting exhibits and collections. Do old yearbooks, photo albums, or the milk bottle collection turn you on? Or pick a year of the *Hamburg Item* and look up your special occasions. Check out the display cases, full of interesting objects. Aerial photos on our walls are a visit to the past. While away hours looking through the library of various local historical subjects. And lots more. We are open most Sundays 1 to 4 p.m. or by appointment

A DAY AT GETTYSBURG

On a beautiful sunny day, September 10, a group of 47 traveled to Gettysburg to take a Berks County-centric tour of the battlefield, led by local historian Ben Varner, founder of “Walking in Their Shoes: Civil War”, a project started to connect families with their Civil War heritage. The tour included stops at Herbal Woods, Oak Ridge, the National Cemetery, the Visitors Center, Little Round Top, the Pennsylvania Memorial, and the Angle where we saw the statue of a man from the Hamburg area, Pvt. John Lindenmuth. Before heading home, we had a delicious buffet dinner at The Farmhouse Restaurant at the Barn Resort.

While it was a long day, we enjoyed the stories of local soldiers who helped win the Battle of Gettysburg. The trip also helped raise several hundred dollars for our Historical Society. You can find more information about local Civil War soldiers at Ben’s website WITSCivilWar.Blogspot.com.



The Tour Group at Pennsylvania Memorial

SATISFYING WORK

Please read this article to the very end!!!

Our officers and some of our local members really put their shoulder to the wheel and see that the necessary work gets done, at the museum and in the background. Some time ago, our president asked each officer and board member to write a detailed list of the tasks they are responsible for, to make any transition to a new officer or board member a bit easier. That revealed how much gets done to keep our Historical Society running smoothly and fulfilling its motto “preserving the past for the future.” And they

all apparently find the work important and personally rewarding as well.

When the Building Project began, that added a whole new layer of work that had to be done, decisions that had to be made, research and meetings, financial details, many things that were new to the group. The fact that it has taken so long to get the actual building started is not due to any lack of effort on their part, but more to bureaucracy and problems at that level. We are now approaching the actual groundbreaking, we think.

That will mean we need a great many workers to carry out the move, once the new building can finally be occupied. All of you have moved, at least once and probably many times, and know what that involves. Now project that onto a museum full to the brim with artifacts, each one with a place in our history, and old deeds, books and photos, plus display cases, shelves and furniture of various sizes.

We have made a beginning, by measuring and considering possible use and placement in the new museum. Displays must be organized beforehand, and careful packing done when moving day nears. We have a second floor at the stone house on State Street that is full of items not on display. Decisions must be made on whether to keep or dispose of those things, some of which were left at our door but not relevant to our history. That task alone is daunting.

Our display topics will include the businesses that once flourished here, workers and products, local stores and advertisers, our schools and sports, home life, wartime and military, farming, Richard Etchberger, the King Frost Parade, music and fun activities, the canal and railroads, interesting collections, artists, and much more. The library section will include 100 years of *The Hamburg Item*, yearbooks, and all our photo albums and scrapbooks, as well as the many books we have from the various towns, churches and cemeteries, so useful to researchers.

So we now are at the point where we should be organizing this move. Please, consider volunteering in whatever way interests you, but especially helping to organize this move so that when our new museum opens, you can proudly say you helped it happen. Call our president, or any officer, and tell us how you would like to help.

One day, not too far away, we could also be putting out an appeal for boxes – lots and lots of boxes!

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GET TO KNOW US

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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