

The Berlin Informer



East Berlin Historical Preservation Society

July – September 2020

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Reflections

on Life During Covid-19

These last 3 months got me thinking that things aren't very different than my growing up years here on my home place. My Dad always told us we all work till the jobs are done, then we can all rest. In summer we had a garden which fed us so we didn't buy groceries on a regular basis. In summer we worked, played outside, visited with relatives and had picnics and reunions.

I have found these past months to be calming, less stressful, and have had time to do things I enjoy even though it's work. My garden is my quiet place. Friends have commented how quiet it is out back. It's been nice without much traffic going down the road but unfortunately it's slowly changing.

I have noticed people have been kinder and more patient than before. Have they found it to be calming as I have?

I liked the gas prices but with nowhere to go it lasted a long time. There have been fewer places to spend money and I do not shop online. I'm finding I need less stuff. I've had time to clear out cupboards and closets but found there is nowhere to drop them. I'm sure I'm not the only one that's happened to.

So to sum it up, I've rather enjoyed this quarantine except for not seeing my family and friends. Social media has helped and my cooking friends and I have shared pictures of the beautiful breads and food we've been making. Stay safe, healthy and happy.

Submitted by Jane Fox

EBHPS Board of Directors

The EBHPS July 15 general meeting presentation, “George Kennan: Diplomat, Historian, Neighbor, Friend”, is canceled.

Sharon O’Connell, a Speakers’ Committee member and I, as well as the presentation panel which includes Michael Hrinyak, Wayne Lau and myself have reached this decision in the interests of the health safety of panel members and attendees during this time of Covid19.

Submitted by Lucia Hrinyak

September 16 Program Planned

Adam Shefts (a.k.a. the Victorian Historian) will do a presentation on life during the Victorian and Edwardian eras at Red Men’s Hall on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 starting at 7:30 pm.

Adam's interest spans the time period from the Civil War in the 1860's to the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. You will learn little known facts about advertising, animals, crime, disasters, beauty and fashion, and even death!

Mark your calendars and come prepared to be amazed at what life was like during this time period!

***** Please note: All programs are subject to possible cancellation due to Covid-19.**

Submitted by Sharon O’Connell

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A word from our Treasurer, Hanna Furst...

The COVID-19 virus has played havoc with everyone. It has made it hard to continue our yearly fundraisers, so that puts a burden on our operating expenses.

Our only hope to get through these trying times is with the continued financial support of our members. Any donation would be greatly appreciated, and if you have already made a donation; we thank you for your continued support.

Have a blessed day, and I hope to see you at our upcoming meetings.

Many thanks to Hoffman & Woodward for donating and tending the four beautiful flower baskets displayed on Red Men's front overhang. Jan and David have helped make the building look more inviting for several years; their work is greatly appreciated.

June 9, 1975:

First recorded meeting of what became the EBHPS...

Approximately 25 people met to discuss planning for a town fair to raise funds for the nation's bicentennial celebration in "76". It was agreed that it was important to involve as many residents as possible, and that two different atmospheres would be maintained, one for colonial crafts and another for contemporary crafts and food. The agreed name for the event was "Colonial Day".

Committees were formed for finding vendors, advertising and entertainment.

There was discussion about the early houses in town and how local interest in the structures and their former owners could be encouraged.

Late in the meeting Melissa Roos suggested "East Berlin Historical Conservation Society" as a name for the committee and it was adopted.

The next meeting was set for June 18 at the old fire hall

Who Knew?

A recent inquiry from a descendent of Abraham Swigart led to the discovery of an old set of notes at Red Men's which details a 1975 investigation of the mill by G. M. Voaden. He seems to have spent a good amount of time at the mill itself and also had a lengthy discussion with Cott Jacobs, owner of the mill house. Mr. Jacobs pointed out an old tombstone near the bottom of the barn ramp bearing the following inscription:

"In memory of John Swigart, son of Abraham Swigart who departed this life October 30, 1814, aged 23 years, 8 months and 8 days"

The existence of this stone was news to me so, camera in hand, I visited the current mill house owners and there it was, looking its age and tilting appropriately, but still legible in the right light. Will someone please take a better picture of it than I was able to?



The stone was discovered when excavating for the new home of Mr. Jacobs' son about 200 yards south on Beaver Creek Road. Another Swigart stone was found later but was placed under some trees near the road and then disappeared.

Submitted by Bev Jadus

Life on the Pennsylvania Home Front During World War II, an Oral History Project

As introduced in the last issue, we begin a series of recollections from those who lived through stressful times nearly 80 years ago:

Interview 3: Mrs. Mary Ida Brown

*Interviewer: Jessica Zepp, 9th grade student at BSHS
March 20, 1995*

The following is a brief summary of parts of the original tape recording.

Mary Ida Brown was secretary to the president at a York company which made bakery and other equipment prior to the war. It converted to work which employees knew was secret involving torpedoes, mortars, guns and, as later revealed, had connections to the Manhattan Project. Mary and other workers boarded a bus near the current Penn Woods building on Harrisburg St. and, with others picked up along the way, were taken to York and dropped off some distance from her job location. Mary was aware that during this time women took over many of the jobs formerly done by men but received lesser pay. Mary's sister was in the WAVES, working at a veterans' hospital in Philadelphia.

The ration committee gave Mary enough gas to visit her husband on base in Florida before he was overseas for about two years. They wrote to each other frequently but delivery was inconsistent with mail often arriving in batches followed by long periods of nothing. She showed the interviewer an example of how letters sent were "miniaturized" by the government to reduce bulk and weight.

While at the back door of her church one day she received a telegram notifying her that her husband had been wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. (She recalled how telegrams were printed out on paper tapes which were then taped to the delivery letter.) He was sent first to a field hospital, then on to Paris, New York and the VA Hospital in Butler, PA, where he remained for some time recovering from a wounded leg.

Mary indicated that she and many others were so relieved that the war was over that they put some of the details out of mind.

Interview 22: Mrs. Helen Wallace Snyder

Interviewer: Carol Donley, 9th grade student at BSHS

December 6, 1995

The following is taken from a paper written by Mrs. Snyder, a rural school teacher in York County, and provided for the interview.

Late in the fall of the year of 1942, we were told to look around over the farm-lands for Milk-weed plants and gather the pods when ripe. The silky floss, within, could be used for filler in canvas waterproof life-preservers placed on ships transporting soldiers to other countries. We did and the children gained much satisfaction helping our country and its military. . .

Time was very demanding during the war years. After school hours teachers were assigned places enabling us to spot planes (to check for enemy planes, really).

Another project, to which teachers were assigned, was that of registering people in the community for Rationing Books. The government's assignments held priority, so we were only allowed so much of anything. Commodities such as sugar, flour, coffee, cereals and canned goods were rationed. Other rations were bed linens, blankets, towels and other necessities and gasoline. . .

In the one-room school, I had to make my own fire and warm the building with a pot-bellied stove or a little skirted furnace, and each teacher had so much coal and wood put in the coal-house. It was up to the teacher to save on the fuel, for when that was all used from the coal-house – there would be no more for that year. I tried hard to save fuel so that it would last the winter out - - for the children had to walk to school and some had far to walk. They needed a warm building when they arrived in winter-time.

As the war penetrated deeper into families whose sons were eligible for the draft, children became more conscious of what sacrificing really meant, and at the same time, being more conservative. . .

In some parts of the country/state, there were camps set up for some of the captured prisoners of war. They (POWS) were put to work in large orchards and canning factories, but for the small farms, farm laborers were not easy to come by. Again, we managed, but it wasn't always easy. . .

Life is never easy when the nations/countries are at war, and being involved with many school-children in communities, bad news travels fast. If one family received BAD NEWS, we were all affected. When one family hurt, we all hurt....a sacrifice had been made....for our country....not soon to be forgotten.

Some acted as Air-Raid Wardens. During Black-Outs the warden, with his special little flashlight went around over the community checking on lights. If any light protruded at all in, or around a window, the person living there was asked to correct it, especially, "Pull the blinds".

The Mrs. Snyder's records include other school projects, victory gardens, the shortage of school supplies and an amusing anecdote about a married couple from Washington and Warrington townships who had to explain how they slept in two different townships in the same house in order to receive one ration book.

2020 Calendar of Events

| DATE | EVENT | TIME | LOCATION |
|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| July 15 | "George Kennan: Diplomat, Historian, Neighbor, Friend" | | |
| <u>Canceled</u> | | | |
| August 19 | Board Meeting | 6 p.m. | Red Men's Hall |
| September 12 | EBACC Fall Festival | | EBACC |
| September 16 | Board Meeting | 6 p.m. | Red Men's Hall |
| | General Meeting | 7:30 p.m. | " |
| The Victorian Historian - Adam Shefts | | | |
| October 21 | Board Meeting | 6 p.m. | " |
| November 18 | Board Meeting | 6 p.m. | " |
| | General Meeting | 7:30 p.m. | " |
| Election of Officers and Directors Program TBA | | | |
| November 27, 28, 29 | Log House Show | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Log House |
| December 6 | Historic House Tour | | TBA |
| December 12 | Holiday Dinner | 6 p.m. | Red Men's Hall |
| December 16 | Board Meeting | 6 p.m. | " |