



The Greater Dover Historical Society Inc.

NOVEMBER 2008



2009 Regular Meeting Dates

- January 15
- February 19
- March 19
- April 16
- May 21
- June 18
- July 16 - picnic
- August 20
- September 17
- October 15
- November 19

All meetings are being held at the Calvary Lutheran Church on the square in Dover @ 7:00pm.

HOLIDAY SALE!

The blacksmith shop replicas will be on sale for \$14.00 until December 31. Act now to get your replica to share with family and friends for the holidays! Replicas are available @ Botterbusch Jewellery, Dover Township Office or call Madelyn Shermeyer, 292-2018.

President's Column

By Madelyn Shermeyer

I can hardly believe another year has almost passed, and it's time for the Greater Dover Historical Society (GDHS) to look back and recall some of the achievements of 2008. We had no major projects as we had in 2007, but the GDHS has not rested on its laurels-we still accomplished many minor projects. I have picked out some of the accomplishments for 2008-the list would be much too long to list them all.

The Blacksmith Shop photos and text are on the GDHS web site. Please visit the web site at www.gdhspa.org. This Blacksmith Shop site encompasses all the stages that the GDHS volunteers had to accomplish-from the tear down to the rebuilding of the shop.

The GDHS was fortunate to have had two speakers in 2008. Ron Botterbusch spoke on civil defense during WWII. After Ron's presentation, he asked the members to share their memories-many did, and it was so interesting to hear what others remembered from this trying time in our history. Most recently, June Lloyd presented us with a slide show on Frakturs (certificates, often hand illuminated, popular in the late 1700's to 1900 and used by the Pennsylvania Dutch to document events such as births and deaths). June has had many accomplishments in her career, from her education and professional history, memberships in historical and community organizations, publications, exhibits and awards. June was kind enough to stay after our business meeting to answer many questions from our members.

The Society ran the concession stand at the Dover Township's Fall Fest event for the third year. Our volunteers put in a full day's work; it sure sounded like they were having a lot of fun. I don't think I've ever seen a group that can work all day and be so jovial.

The Blacksmith Shop Open House on the 2nd Saturday of the months of April through October was a success-some Saturdays more than others but overall very successful (Please note the Blacksmith Shop Open House article in this newsletter.)

The GDHS is planning on hosting three speakers for 2009. We have had some very good suggestions from the membership on topics such as pow-wow, green renovation of historic homes, coverlet weavings and the Jr. Curator Program of the York Heritage Trust. If anyone has suggestions for speakers, please call Madelyn at 292-2018 with speaker and subject information.

REPLICAS: The GDHS must sell approximately 116 more replicas before the organization can start realizing a profit on the replicas. If every family (not every family member) bought a replica, we would be very close to realizing this goal. After researching the membership list, I realize there are many members that have purchased a replica/s. For the members that haven't made their purchase, doing so would certainly help the Society in reaching its goal. The replicas can be purchased by contacting one of the following: Madelyn Shermeyer at 292-2018, Ron Botterbusch's jewelry store, or the Dover Township Municipal Building.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of the volunteers that so readily volunteered when needed this past year.

To all of the members of the GDHS-a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy Profitable New Year.

A POEM

(Author Unknown)

Submitted by Gayle Heagy

A clothes line was a news forecast to neighbors passing by. There were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry. It also was a friendly link for neighbors always knew if company had stopped on by to spend a night or two. For then you'd see the "fancy sheets" And towels upon the line; you'd see the "company table cloths" with intricate design. The line announced a baby's birth to folks who lived inside as brand new infant clothes were hung so carefully with pride. The ages of the children could so readily be known by watching how the sizes changed you'd know how much they'd grown. It also told when illness struck, as extra sheets were hung; then nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too, haphazardly were strung. It said, "Gone on vacation now" when lines hung limp and bare. It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged with not an inch to spare. New folks in town were scorned upon if wash was dingy gray, As neighbors carefully raised their brows, and looked the other way..but clotheslines now are of the past for dryers make work less. Now what goes on inside a home is anybody's guess. I really miss that way of life. It was a friendly sign when neighbors knew each other best by what hung on the line!

NOTE: Reading this poem, Gayle states she is reminded of Ada Swartz on East Canal Street. She could whistle beautifully, but she did it at daybreak as she hung her clothes "on the line" every Monday morning. Needless to say, she woke me "up" and I complained to my mother who suggested I listen to how pretty it sounded and not to complain.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The West Manchester Historical Society has invited the GDHS members to the following events: November 17, 2008 — 7:00pm — WMTHS is hosting guest speaker, Don Billet, to give a presentation on "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Lancaster County".

November 29, 2008 — 12:00pm — WMTHS will be visiting the new Visitors' Center in Gettysburg. Please see Norma Botterbusch or Kay Stitley for details.

Dover Borough will be hosting the annual Christmas Tree Lighting on Friday, November 28, 2008 at 7:00pm on the Dover square.

Blacksmith Shop Open Houses 2008

Submitted by Jo Ott

The last open house was held on October 11, and the season should be considered a success, if for no other reason than it did not rain on any of the ten Saturdays the Blacksmith Shop was open to visitors.

A tally of names in the guest sign-in book indicates an average of 27 people enjoyed Saturdays and the fair weather throughout the spring and summer months at GDHS' Blacksmith Shop, with most originating from the Dover area. Another two dozen people were from other York County areas, and from Adams, Franklin, Cumberland and Lancaster counties.

Several visitors represented other states. The farthest distance covered was via Alaska by a visitor who was visiting a Dover resident. Others were from California, Florida and New York City.

Much of the merchandise on display and for sale was made in the shop by our resident smithy Ted Ziegler and his assistant, Larry Law. Ted was also assisted at times by his son, Ted Jr. Popular items purchased were crosses, rings, paper towel holders, heart-shaped and other styles of hooks, for a total of \$269.00.

Although Ted and Larry periodically work in the Blacksmith Shop throughout the remaining months of winter, I look forward to spring and another season of greeting visitors to GDHS' Blacksmith Shop starting in April 2009.

The Shack Submitted by Jo Ott

You're curious, I know, because you've asked questions like, "How did you get this stuff?" I'll explain.

After waiting months for signs the Smittie's pretzel shack would soon meet its demise, I would stop occasionally and ask "When?" The last time I stopped to ask, on my way home from the Blacksmith Shop Open House on August 9th, I explained to the young man inside that I was with the Greater Dover Historical Society and wanted to be on hand to photograph the demolition of the shack.

Christopher picked up his cell phone, placed a call, and then handed me the phone. I found myself talking to Todd Smith who, after we talked a minute, invited me to his home where he was relaxing with his fiancée, Joan Bosserman.

When I arrived several minutes later, I was met at the door by Joan and three yapping and very excited pooches. I was assured the dogs would settle down in a few minutes, which they did, but not before the little one took one leap and landed kerplunk! on my chest.

Dogs aside, we settled into conversations about the history of Smittie's Pretzels which began as a hard pretzel bakery on West Gas Alley (now Avenue) in the city of York. Todd's grandfather, Lester Arthur Smith, and his wife Charlotte took over the abandoned pretzel bakery formerly owned and operated by Paul and Stanley Deppen in the mid-1930s.

Lester and Charlotte remained at the Gas Alley address, also their home, until the late 1940's when they moved their bakery to Dover Township. Further details of the Smith family will be in a future GDHS newsletter.

As he talked, Todd mentioned the lady (Georgia Sprengel) at the township building asked if he was going to donate anything to the historical society. Todd was reluctant to get involved for fear the society would want to stop the destruction of the shack because of its historical value to the area. (I later learned that Georgia assured him the society does not function that way and that the society would appreciate anything he would donate.)

I also assured Todd that the society would love to have anything he's willing to donate because of Smittie's long history in the Dover area.

Propped up against a piece of furniture in the dining room where we were sitting sat a "Smittie's Soft Pretzels" sign, such as those used at roadside pretzel sales, and I pointed to it as an example of what the society would accept and would like to have for its collection. It was offered, and I accepted it.

As Todd continued to talk, Joan left the room and returned with a copy of an old photograph of his grandfather holding his infant daughter Glenda, with his small son Glenn, standing at his side. Glenn would later become Todd's father. This photograph is in front of the Smittie's Pretzels building on Gas Alley. In the nearly two hours I was there, Joan gave me additional photos. One photo captures Lester, Charlotte, and their two children standing at the rear of their Smittie's Pretzels delivery truck on Gas Alley. Lester is wearing a WWII Army uniform. Another photo is of Lester and an unidentified employee standing in front of the oven in the Dover pretzel bakery. The oven is the original oven brought to Dover from the Gas Alley bakery. Two more-recent photos are of racks of pretzels drying on pretzel boards and one of Todd's own family taken in the 1990's.

All the donated items were presented to Gayle Heagy, the society's assistant archivist, at the August 21, 2008 monthly meeting.

Before leaving his home, Todd promised to let me know when the shack demolition would take place. It was scheduled for the following Monday, but that date was probably going to change to later in the week. As it turned out, a quick glance for any emails before rushing out of the house that Monday morning, and I saw the day was back on schedule, and the demolition would take place between 11 and 2. Having already thought to get the two menu boards and the counter removed before the heavy equipment crushed the shack flat, I quickly changed my plans and headed to Dover.

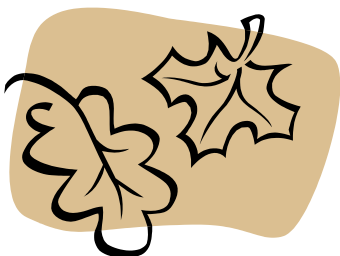
In addition to the items mentioned above, the society has copies of some of the 100+ photos taken that day for its scrapbook and a compact disc with many of the photos. The shack, although looking like even the Big Bad Wolf could blow it over with a few good huffs and puffs, was a stubborn old shanty and required several aggressive nudges with the heavy equipment to flatten it and the use of a chain saw to dismember some of its structure.

Two dump-truckloads later and it was all gone, its site now paved over, as though it never was.

As I was driving home after the meeting on the 21st, cresting the hill at Sky Top and rounding the curve ahead, there before me in the darkness loomed a big, blazing-blue, neon pretzel. It glows from the lantern room of the the new Smittie's "pretzel place."

I know you want to know, "Why a lighthouse?" At one time there was a thought to open a "Smitties" at a beach. Since this didn't materialize, a small part of the beach was brought to Dover.

Although not as attractive as the new blue and white lighthouse, the old shack served well thousands of passersby who stopped and bought even thousands more soft pretzels in its fifty plus years of service. Two generations of Dover memories never to be forgotten.



GREATER DOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2 S. Main Street, Dover PA 17315

Website: www.gdhspa.org

Email: doverhistory@gdhspa.org

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS

AUGUST 11, 2008



Going,



going,



GONE!



But not before the Greater Dover Historical Society was gifted the two menu boards and the counter by the third generation and present owner, Todd Smith.