



The Greater Dover Historical Society Inc.

MARCH 2012



President's Column by Madelyn Shermeyer

Another year, another column. Will try to bring all of our members up to date since our last Newsletter in October 2011.

At the November election, Cindy Snyder was elected to the Board of Directors, she was also asked to Chair the Board. We want to thank Jeff Koch for his years of service on the Board of Directors, his input was most valuable and we appreciate his service.

In January the Society hosted Mr. Scott Mingus. His presentation was on York County during the Civil War. He spoke of the short occupation by the Confederates in Dover Borough and Dover Township; it was a very informative and entertaining presentation. Part of Scott's presentation was interactive and those attending indicated their pleasure of being allowed to participate.

Members attending our January and February meetings were asked to suggest speakers for future meetings. We had many excellent suggestions and at our March meeting the president will ask for two of these suggestions are chosen to address our Society for the year of 2012.

The combined Bloodroot I and II and the Replicas are still available, these can be purchased by contacting Madelyn at 292-2018 or mmshermeyer@ddogcom.net, they may also be purchased at the Dover Township Municipal building or Botterbusch's Jewelry store on the square in Dover.

Gayle Heagy submitted an application to the York County Heritage program to include the blacksmith shop to be designated as an historic site. The application was approved by the York County Planning Commission and a certificate was issued to the Greater Dover Historical Society. President Shermeyer and Secretary Lori Koch attended the YCP meeting to receive the certificate which Jeff Koch framed and the township attached it to the wall above the GDHS display case in the lobby of the Township Municipal building. Gayle explained that the blacksmith shop will appear in a York County tourist guidebook and map of historic attractions in the county which is distributed to those that visit the county.

Recently placed in the GDHS display case at the Township Municipal building is an 1838 Springfield Bolt action trapdoor rifle used by the Jacob Joner Society of Dover. This rifle was donated to the GDHS by the late Al Heagy and his wife Gayle and is a most valuable donation to the Society. Also new to the case is a 'foot warmer' that was used during the horse and buggy days and in the very early automobiles that had no heaters-this is a unique addition to our archives donated by Georgia Sprenkel our Township Zoning Officer. All that is donated to our Society is valuable. I mention these two items only because of their uniqueness and because we were able to display them.



THE NEW CAROUSEL BUILDING OPEN HOUSE

Friday, May 18, 2012

6:00pm to 8:00pm

Come and see the new Carousel Building at Brookside Park! Light refreshments will be provided by the Dover Township Recreation Department. Hope to see you there!

FUNDRAISER ITEMS FOR SALE — available for purchase from “Our Store” on GDHS website or contact any GDHS member

Blacksmith Shop replicas \$12 — Bloodroot Book \$10 — Notepaper \$7 — Brookside Park booklets \$2 — Trash Bags \$4 for pkg. of 25 bags or \$30 case of 200 bags

Orders can be placed by email to doverhistory@gdhspa.org

GDHS donations — a reminder to members that any donation or bequeath to the GDHS of memorabilia or other historical items should be at least 50 years old. If anyone has questions concerning any item to be donated, please contact our Assistant Archivist, Gayle Heagy.

One Dover Nightingale and More

By Jo Ott

(I interviewed Reba Gross about one year ago at Country Meadows in Shiloh. Later, she moved to Manor Care North. It is with sadness we note that Reba passed away Monday, February 20, 2012.)

Mention the name Reba in a gathering anywhere around Dover and those in attendance over a certain age will know exactly who that is. I first met her a few years ago while attending the auction of her personal belongings and her home on Carlisle Road, south of Dover Borough.

Sitting in her wheel chair outside the garage entrance that day, she had a steady stream of visitors, expressing their sadness over the occasion and wishing her well in her new home at Country Meadows in Shiloh. Our conversation turned to an item I was told was listed in the auction announcement that might be better served as a donation to the Greater Dover Historical Society. After talking with Mike Stermer, the auctioneer, I discovered the auction ad was in error--the metal *Dover* bank should have read *Drover* bank.

Before leaving I discussed with Reba her willingness to be interviewed by me for the Greater Dover Historical Society, explaining to her how important it is for the history of the area in particular and to document her life as school nurse in the Dover school district. She agreed and a date and time was set to meet at Country Meadows.

Reba Mae Leib was born in Dover on May 18, 1925. Reba's mother, Ruth Romaine Drawbaugh Leib, was born February 15, 1905 in Dover. The daughter of William and Flora Drawbaugh, Ruth is a first cousin to the father of GDHS' archivist emeritus, Dr. Charles Drawbaugh. Reba's father was John R. Leib.

Reba and her mother Ruth lived with her grandparents in Dover. She was a lifelong resident of the Dover area and the only child of Ruth. The family had a large garden in the rear yard of their home and there were chickens, pigs and other small animals, typical of Dover families of that era. Indoor plumbing came to their home when she was about six years old. The only heat in their home was a first floor heater where the family would gather round.

Reba was confined by her mother to the family's yard to play outdoors. Like most young girls that age, Reba played with dolls and play dress-up, jump ball and mush ball--a game similar to softball, but played with a softer ball and slightly different rules. One of her favorite things to do was with one of her childhood friends, Elwood Swartzbaugh. They would lie on their backs on the porch floor looking up to watch the clouds go by and discuss what they looked like. Other good childhood friends were Ralph Gross, Arlene Weaver, Woodie Swartzbaugh and his sister, Stewart Gross and Richard Shellenberger. Most of the boys lived on her side of the street.

From age 12 on, her mother would take her and friend Gloria Reichley to York on the trolley to attend the Strand Theater and to shop in the city.

Reba's grandfather, William Drawbaugh, was the only family member who owned a car and who could drive. He would drive to Stouch's general store because it was too far to walk from their home, but they could walk to Snellbaker's and other stores in the borough. Memorable family celebrations were held at Reba's home. Her grandmother had seven sisters and one brother, so there was always a birthday, anniversary and many other occasions to celebrate. The family's favorite foods were schnitz & knepp¹, pot pie and cherry pies for dessert.

Reba was educated in the Dover schools. She loved history, but not world history, and Latin. Some of her favorite teachers were Clare Julius, Helen Spangler and Edison Brown. In high school her favorite sports to participate in were volleyball and basketball. Reba's mother played the piano and violin and Reba told me she was "forced" into piano and accordion about age 12. She rode the trolley to York to get lessons at Julius Music House.

Her mother was educated thru the eighth grade in Dover schools, then less than one year more at West York. Ruth Leib worked in a Dover cigar factory and later, as a receptionist for her father who co-owned the 7-UP bottling works on Princess street in York. Like her mother, Reba was a member of the Eastern Star thru her grandfather's Mason affiliation. She is a member of the Dover UCC.

Reba Gross' entry into the nursing profession was unplanned and unexpected. She told me that she had been admitted into a college in Annville (Lebanon Valley?) and was all packed to go when her grandfather, who was paying for her education, decided at the last moment that he wasn't going to spend that much money on a girl because they don't deserve an education. Earlier, Reba had discussed going into nursing with Ann Herrold, wife of Dover's Dr. Lewis Herrold. They had talked about how nice it would be to be a nurse, but Reba thought later whether she would be sorry if she went into nursing. Her grandfather's sudden and ill-timed decision forced Reba into making a decision and she thought back to her talks with Ann Herrold.

Reba Leib graduated from the York Hospital School of Nursing in 1946. Throughout her career she completed additional, required coursework as a school nurse, at Penn State University, Millersville University and the University of Pennsylvania.

On May 30, 1947, Reba Mae Leib and Ralph Melvin Gross were married in the UCC by Rev. Roy Limbert. Members of the wedding party were Gloria Reichley, Betty Ketterman, Nancy Hoffheins, Arlene Lehr, Kenneth Krout and Elwood Swartzbaugh. There were two additional wedding party members, both named Stewart Gross. The reception was held at the Pine Tree Inn in West York.

Ralph Gross passed away April 5, 2007.

Reba's first nursing position was with the Visiting Nurses Association of York beginning in 1946 and lasting for two years. Beginning in September 1948 thru 1955 she was the school nurse in all the Dover schools working one day a week for one year, then working full time in the Dover intermediate school until about 1982. Retirement from school nursing was also the end of Reba's professional career.

I asked Reba if she recalled any memorable care moments while a school nurse. She told the story of a Dover family that included a young girl and her young brother, around ten years of age. The family was living "in the back of a truck body."

Mr. Cooper, the supervising principal, asked Reba to bathe the young girl. Not having supplies at school, Reba had to go home to get towels and other items to give the girl a shower at school. The life of a school nurse!

The York Hospital School of Nursing was established in 1894 and issued its first diploma in 1897. Reba Leib Gross was one of a long line of Dover area residents who graduated from the School of Nursing. Others from the Dover area were: Grace Louise Spangler (1934); Mildred L. Reichley (1939); Doris Beyer (1941); Fern E. Julius and Dorothy Quickel (1944); Jessie Rae Gross, Betty Lentz and Lois Miller (1951); Betty Kinsey and Agnes Rohrbaugh Stough (1954); Mary Flohr Chronister (1956); June Kinsey and Joyce Miller (1957); Patricia K. Schmuck and Beverly Jean Walter (1964); Karen Lee Boose (1965); Denise Sandborg Moore (1975); Cathy V. Atwood (1972); and Kenneth Bucher (1971). (Information is from the School of Nursing yearbooks at the York Historic Trust.)

Attempts to locate additional Dover area graduates from the former York Hospital School of Nursing, since merged with The York College of Pennsylvania, were unsuccessful.

1. There are probably as many variations in recipes for this well-known Pennsylvania Dutch dish as there are cooks who prepare it. *Schnitz* are thinly sliced, dried apples and the *knepp*, spelled various ways, are small dumplings made with flour, baking powder, eggs and milk. It is usually made with boiling a ham, sometimes with brown sugar and other ingredients. The *schnitz* and *knepp* are dropped into the still boiling ham broth once the meat is cooked. Some recipes warn against the cook lifting the lid for a peek as it leaves steam escape that dumplings require for "fluffiness" "vunst" done. (Small bags of *schnitz* can be purchased Fridays at Eastern Market.)



GREATER DOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PRESERVING OUR HISTORY FOR OUR FUTURE