



Historic QUAKERTOWN

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February 2021 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We hope you are enduring the winter of 2021! As this is being written there is the forecast of several winter storms on the horizon. May cannot come too soon.

The Board of Directors of the Quakertown Historical Society met on Wednesday evening February 10, 2021. All committees gave reports as to what they hope to achieve in the remainder of 2021. Of course, all of this was tempered by the continuing effect that Covid-19 is having on our community.

We have a few speakers lined up for membership meetings once they are deemed appropriate to schedule. It looks somewhat optimistic that, at least, for the first half of the year, that will not happen.

We are also looking for more members to get involved in the Society. If you have the time and are interested, please contact President Christina Landis at the above e-mail address or by phone.

We have been told by the Borough Manager Scott McElree that the Borough is looking to do needed repairs to the Burgess Foulke House (BFH). A new roof is also in the works for Liberty Hall.

The Archives & Display Committee will continue it's work in identifying and recording the items found in BFH, Liberty Hall, the Museum and, once the weather permits, the Barn. Work nights have been scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evening of each month from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Please join us if you can.

There is also an ongoing need for finances to support the minimum expenses that the Society currently deals with, monthly. The Events & Fundraising Committee is in the process of planning several events to raise the needed funds. You will hear more about that in future newsletters. As always, any contributions at any time are very much needed and appreciated.

Finally, the first article we have included in this newsletter is about Henry Franklin. The Society is in the process of filling for an historical marker with the PA State Museum Commission to place a marker in the spot where Mr. Franklin lived while in Quakertown.

We hope you enjoy these updates and articles concerning Quakertown history.

We wish for each of you to stay healthy!!

Henry Franklin – Esteemed Employee of Richard Moore
By Lillian H. Shaw
(Undated)

Richard Moore of Richland Township was a prominent member of the Religious Society of Friends. He was active in the anti-slavery movement by sheltering and feeding many runaway slaves.

In 1834, Mr. Moore built a large stone house on the east side of the Old Bethlehem Pike. It was probably the first house built in the community where intoxicating liquors were not furnished to the workmen during its erection.

A pottery located near the house was operated until 1880. The Moore property was one of the stations of the “Underground Railroad” used in assisting slaves on their way from the southern states to Canada to gain freedom.

One of the many hundreds of runaway slaves was Henry Franklin, whose slave name was Bill Budd, son of Jared and Ann Budd, slaves of Adam Good of Taneytown, Maryland.

When Henry was nine years old, he was sold to Abraham Shriner of Little Pipe Creek, Maryland, where he served his master for twenty-four years. He was well trusted and was given much responsibility on the farm. He had been promised his freedom at the age of thirty-five. Two years before arriving at that age and hearing nothing about his freedom, Henry decided to take the matter into his own hands.

In 1837, having been given permission to visit his father for a few days, Henry and three others traveled northward to Emmor Kimber of Kimberton, Pennsylvania. Here they separated and Henry finally reached the Richard Moore home just outside of Quakertown.

Believing Henry would be safe there, and needing someone to help him, Mr. Moore hired Henry. During the seven years of employment, Henry drove the long pottery wagon, which was loaded with runaway slaves, and took them over the mountain in the first step toward freedom. The wagon was loaded with coal or merchandise on its return trip.

Henry married his Maryland sweetheart shortly after she journeyed to the Moore home. She died a year later. In time, Henry purchased a house in Quakertown and remarried and had several children.

In 1864, Henry moved to Philadelphia. In 1865 he was employed by Joseph Johns, the curator of the Academy of Fine Arts, as janitor and messenger. There he remained in service until his death, much trusted and respected.

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I Remember When Movies

By Helen Shelling

May 8, 1996

My mother used to tell me about her going to the movies in Trumbauersville when she was young. A group of young folks would pile into a horse drawn wagon to enjoy the new-fangled invention of the day – all silent films – always a villain chasing some beautiful young girl (Peral White, I believe) across the ice flows of the Far North who was inevitably rescued by some stout-hearted hero who outfoxed the villain. Quakertown also supported a movie house on East Broad Street in the old trolley barn (large stone building) just east of the railroad tracks.

By the time I saw my first movie there were two theaters in town – the PALACE – on Branch Street (now West Broad Street – building occupied by Dimmig Electric Company) and the KARLTON on West Broad Street (just east of the Free Press Building).

In early years there was always a vaudeville act between shows (a big black dancing bear drinking a soda is the only act I recall). I am certain the movies were still SILENTS for the first TALKIE I recall was “On the Sunny Side of the Street” with Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell, and then only a portion of the movie was in voice, where Gaynor sang a song to Farrell’s picture. The remainder was silent. I thought them a wonderfully romantic couple.

Finally, I was old enough to be permitted to walk downtown alone, or with friends, to attend a Saturday matinee – 25 cents for an afternoon’s entertainment. Now the movies were all TALKIES. A brief resume of the news of the day was shown first then previews of coming attractions, then a cartoon, and then the SERIAL, usually a western or a Tarzan film. In each matinee a reel of a serial was run, always ending with a cliffhanger of a scene leaving us in eager anticipation of the next week’s segment.

Finally, the main attraction was shown but often we had more interest in the serial than the full-length movie. After the matinee, a dime would buy us a soda or sometimes a small sundae which we devoured before trudging home.

At Christmas time a special matinee was held. Each child bringing a donation of food, to be distributed to the poor, would be permitted to see the film free.

I Remember WhenGrocery Stores

By Helen Shelling

May 8, 1996

There were no SUPERMARKETS – only the corner grocery store. Since I lived on 11th Street, I remember the **Alfred George Grocery** on West Broad Street near 11th Street. He had shelves as high as the ceiling stacked with boxes and cans of all sorts of goodies. In large cans on the floor were pretzels – crackers – potato chips – nothing individually wrapped.

NO SELF-SERVICE – If you wanted a pound of pretzels, the clerk would reach into the can and place the pretzels in a paper bag, put it on the weighing machine, and either remove a pretzel or two, or put one in until he achieved the weight requested.

On the floor also stood a large barrel of pickles and a barrel of molasses (you brought your own jar, and the clerk would fill it for you).

On the counter were buns (Hot Cross buns, McGinty buns – all uncovered) and pot cheese – all in the open.

If you wanted something from the upper shelves, the clerk would get his pole with a gripper at the end, reach up, and pluck the item from the shelf.

You carried your own basket to the store to hold your purchases, all wrapped in newspaper or in paper bags – no PLASTIC.

The grocery owner even delivered orders to the house – no extra charge. I can remember Mr. George had an AUSTIN car – English make – and the smallest car I had ever seen.

I can remember the cost of only one item – BREAD – 10 cents a loaf – for the reason that I was sent to the store with a DIME to buy a loaf and lost this precious dime somewhere on the TRIPPER trolley tracks on Broad Street which I had to cross to get to the store. I hated to return home with my sad story of the loss of a dime, fearing punishment, but luck was with me – no reprimand except a reminder to be more careful in the future.

I also remember JAKIE GERHART'S STORE at the corner of 9th & Juniper Streets. This was a very old-fashioned dry goods store with an assortment of grocery items. Primarily his store contained shelf upon shelf of dressmaking materials – old spool cabinets with endless assortment of threads.

Most housewives made their own dresses and aprons in those days (everyone wore an apron when doing housework and cooking). I even remember some of the older ladies wearing sun bonnets when going out in the hot summer and some wearing dust caps when cleaning.

This store was sold to people by the name of STAUFFER, and then to CLARENCE HUBER, who ran a more modern grocery market.

This location is now occupied by Heller's Barber Shop in the front portion of the building and apartments in the rear.