



Historic QUAKERTOWN

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August 2022 Newsletter

Dear Society Members,

Trust you are enjoying this summer as it is quickly coming to an end.

On July 27, 2022 **the Nominating Committee reported that it is nominating Steve Biddle and Danielle Bodnar for three-year terms** and that they will be up for election at the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations will be accepted at the Meeting.

The Board also set **October 19, 2022 as the date of the Annual Meeting**. The Meeting will be held at McCoolle's Arts & Events Place, 10 S. Main Street, Quakertown, PA 18951 at 7:00 PM.

President Christina Landis reported that the Titanic Tea will be held on September 24, 2022 at McCoolle's Arts & Events Place from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Tickets will go on sale via the Society's website on September 6, 2022 at 10:00 AM. The cost is \$65.00. It is a family friendly event.

Included in this issue of the Newsletter is an article written by George Fox, the now deceased longtime sports editor of the Quakertown Free Press. The article tells how Alumni Field came into existence in 1927. The article appeared in *The Free Press* on August 16, 1980.

Also in this issue of the Newsletter is an article written by Pearl S. Frederick in September 1982 about what it was like to attend a one-room schoolhouse. For some of us it brings back memories of doing just that.

Finally, there is an article that appeared in *The History of Bucks County* in 1905 about Charles F. and Charles E. Durner and the Durner Organ Factory that was located at Front and Juniper Streets in Quakertown.

A Day in a One-Room School

By Pearl S. Frederick

September 1982

The teacher rings the hand bell to call the children into the schoolroom. The pupils take their designated seats according to size - the first graders sit in the small seats in the front of the room; the eighth graders in the back of the room at the larger desks. The number of pupils (may) range from 45 to 50 pupils in the eight grades.

The teacher "calls order" in the room with the desk bell.

The day starts with reading of the Bible. The teacher reads the Bible. Sometimes the older pupils may take turns reading the Bible.

After the Bible is read, the pupils rise and say the Lord's Prayer, led by the teacher.

Then they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, after which a few songs may be sung. The younger pupils learn to sing from the older pupils.

Now they are ready to start classes. All eight classes have had assignments which the teacher has given them the day before. One class at a time recites up front (near the platform) and the rest of the pupils can learn by hearing what the teacher and pupils are saying (if they are smart - since there is no limit to learning).

The subjects taught in the one room school were reading, spelling, arithmetic, history, and penmanship. (Also, geography).

There was a recess of 15-20 minutes at 10:30 AM and 2:15 PM, enough time to get a breath of fresh air and use the outdoor toilets and the outdoor pump. In the winter, those toilets were really, really cold.

Lunch hour. The pupils were excused to get their lunch kettles in the back of the room, bring the lunch pails to the desks, not necessarily their own. (They could eat with a brother or sister or a friend other than their seatmate.) In warm weather, they could eat outside on the playground.

In later years, the hot lunch program was started (by Mrs. Laura Strunk) at Shaw's School along the California Road – where the Woman's Club now meets. Some of the other schools later had hot lunches also. This was the start of the cafeteria system in the schools nowadays. The teacher lit the kerosene stove and put a big boiler (kettle) on it with a mixture of cocoa, milk, and sugar in it. The upper grade girls stirred it to keep it from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Then at 12 o'clock (noon), each pupil was served a tin cup of cocoa, or maybe once a week, potato soup was made and served in their tin cups to eat along with their sandwich from their lunch box.

A literary program was held the last Friday afternoon of each month, a program in which pupils had a chance to show their talents. Recitations, readings, musical numbers (and sometimes little skits or playlets) were presented. Parents were invited to these programs.

The school director (one of them) came in about once a month to check the schools. The director(s) served the nine Richland Township Schools.

Some of the children helped the teacher sweep the floors, clean erasers from the blackboard (to remove the chalk dust in them), sweep the front porch, carry wood, and wash out the toilets. The loved to work for their teacher. The boys would bring in the coal, help with the fire, and in schools where water had to be carried from a neighbor's house, boys and girls would carry a bucket of water.

At the end of the day, the pupils would be excused by the teacher. They would go to the back of the room, put on their wraps (coats and caps), get their empty lunch pails (kettles) and bid the teacher good-bye and start on their way home – not by bus – but walking with their schoolmates.

Charles Frederick Durner & Charles Edward Durner **Taken from *History of Bucks County*** **1905**

Charles Frederick Durner, father of Charles E. Durner, was the son of Christian and Catherine (Goll) Durner, and was born April 3, 1838 in Wurtemberg, Germany. He attended the state schools until he was fourteen years of age, when he commenced a term of apprenticeship to learn the trade of organ building, serving five years. He then went to Lyons and Grenoble, France, at these places working as journeyman and tradesman for about five months. The experience thus gained proved of no little value to him in later years.

In 1859 he emigrated to this country, settling in Zion Hill. There he entered into business for himself, but met with opposition at first, owing to the fact that the trade of organ builder was not a popular one with the people of this country. It was considered time wasted that was spent in "producing sounds" from an instrument.

However, Mr. Durner persevered in his work and has been attended with great success, as is demonstrated by the large and well-equipped factory in Quakertown, to which place he moved his business in 1861. The first organ, Durner built was valued at seven hundred and fifty dollars, the building of which occupied Mr. Durner for nearly a year, the compensation he received bearing the munificent sum of fifty cents per day. His means being limited, he began with foot power, which was superseded by steam as his business developed, and he is now at the head of one of the largest and most completely equipped organ factories in Pennsylvania.

In 1876 he built an organ for the Centennial exposition at Philadelphia, which won for him the highest honors. Though small in size (compared with many others on exhibition), it was considered in volume and sweetness of tone and perfection of mechanism superior to many other organs on exhibition - the production of more pretentious establishments. His instruments also received the first premium at the State fair in 1878.

Mr. Durner's political affiliations are with the Democratic party, and while he takes much interest in local affairs, he has little to do with politics beyond the influence of his opinion he expresses in his vote. He is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church and is especially interested in religious work and was a trustee for many years.

In 1862, Charles Frederick Durner was united in marriage to Miss Mary Jane Speaker, daughter of William and Lydia (Poorman) Speaker of Center County, Pennsylvania. Immediately after his marriage, Mr. Durner and his wife moved to Quakertown, settling in the house where they now reside. The following named children were born to them: Charles Edward Durner (September 1, 1863); Anna Elizabeth (January 5, 1866) and now married to Calvin F. Heckler, lawyer son of John and Victoria (Fluck) Heckler – farmers of Hilltown Township; Mary Katherine, unmarried and living at home. Mary Jane Durner died on January 5, 1893 at the age of 71.

Charles Edward Durner, eldest child of Charles Frederick and Mary Jane (Speaker) Durner, attended the common schools of his native place until his sixteenth year. He then devoted himself to learning the trade of organ building with his father, with whom he is still engaged at the organ factory in Quakertown, on the corner of Front and Juniper Streets – one of the largest and most prosperous of its kind in that section of the country.

Charles Edward and his father have worked themselves up to a very high place in the world of business, and theirs is an example of what perseverance, indomitable will and unfailing energy can accomplish in the way of assisting men to attain the highest success.

In political affairs, Charles Edward helps support the Democratic party, and although he never aspired to public office, takes a lively interest in the welfare of that organization.

He is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, in the affairs of which he has always taken an active part. He was a member of the church council for fourteen years and for a period of thirteen years was secretary of that body.

On June 17, 1889 Charles Edward Durner was united in marriage to Miss Emma Jane Fluck, daughter of William Benjamin and Catherine (Hager) Fluck of Quakertown. Mrs. Durner is a descendant of an old German family who emigrated to this country under Richard and Thomas Penn, settling in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

After their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Durner settled on Juniper and Third Streets, in a house that they had erected previous to their marriage. The following named children were born to them: Harold Frederick (October 25, 1890) who lives at home and attends Quakertown schools; Laura Catherine (March 22, 1893) who also lives at home, attending School in Quakertown.

History of Quakertown Sports *The Free Press* **Over 50 Years On Alumni Field** **August 16, 1980**

Quakertown's Alumni Field has a long and interesting history that stretches back over 50 years. High school teams first started playing on the present site in 1927.

It became possible through the efforts of School Board President Gordon H. Lukenbill and others that the new playing field was obtained. The school board and the borough steam-rolled the ground and a local cemetery provided a lawn mower to get the field in shape.

By the time the opening game rolled around, there were bleachers erected for the hometown fans. The Blue and White squeaked out a 19-18 win over Souderton in the opening game.

Charley Borelli Weisel is credited with the first touchdown scored on the field. Bill "Doc" Weisel scored the second touchdown.

The first large crowd in 1931 was 2,000 when fans saw Sell-Perk score in every period on its way to a 27-0 victory,

Games were shifted back to Lulu Park in 1933 as work was begun on improving the present site.

The most important part of the 1937 season was the dedication of the present Alumni Field on October 9.

It came after gym classes had spent their time picking hundreds of stones out of the ground and it also meant the return to a school-owned field. All the work was done under the watchful eyes of Joseph S. Neidig, the school superintendent who wanted it perfect in every way.

Alumni Field cost \$19,000 to be constructed and consisted of a 15-foot wide one-quarter mile track, a baseball diamond, and a football field.

The 18-foot-high bleachers provided a seating capacity of 1,125 back in 1937. The Paul Shelly Memorial, in honor of a former player who died of injuries, was moved to the northwest corner of the field.

Evergreen trees surrounding both the field and the memorial provided one of the most complete and best-looking complexes in the area at that time.

The first game played on the new Alumni Field was against Souderton. It was November 18 and a cold day, with sleet falling throughout the game. Souderton won the contest 6-0.

The 1946 season was the first played under the lights at Quakertown. The dedication of the Memorial of Lights took place on September 20 before the East Greenville game.

The lights served as a memorial to the men of Quakertown High School who gave their lives during World War II.

In the first game, Quakertown started in fine style when they beat East Greenville 20-0. A crowd of 2,500 saw Stan Schoch score two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to lead the Quakers under new coach Joe Musso.

1947 marked the year the Quakertown teams picked up the name of The Panthers.

After the 1947 season, at a league meeting, it was approved to allow schools of the league to take their teams to camp. Sell-Perk was the only school voting against the policy.

The Thanksgiving Day game in 1953 was played before 5,000 people and the Panthers lost the title to Pennridge 13-7. The \$4,200.00 collected at the gate was a new record.

1954 marked the first year a championship was crowned on Alumni Field. It was decided on Thanksgiving Day when Pennridge and Quakertown went into the game sporting 7-0 league records. Quakertown won the game 14-7.

The present steel bleachers on the East side of the field were first used in 1955.

1956 was another great year for the Panthers on the field. They regained the championship, and several records were established. Bob Landgreen had the most yards rushing up until that time with 945. John Detweiler passed for a record seven touchdowns and was 35 for 55 that year. Ed Becker had a record 26 catches for 313 yards and seven touchdowns.

Records to follow that were established on the field were Bob Lewis' school passing record for one game with 352 yards against Ambler. A second school record for the longest touchdown pass play was set on a Lewis to Gary Dimmig of 93 yards.

In 1963 Alumni Field received a paint bath by some North Penn rooters. Quakertown clobbered the Knights 44-14 in retaliation. Jim Waite led the league in passing that year with 1,117 yards and 10 TD's.

Quakertown came back with a championship in 1965 with one of the biggest teams to ever represent the school.

In 1970 the most offensive-minded team to ever play on Alumni Field took the field. With the Bux-Mont championship hanging in the balance, the Panthers staged an unbelievable offensive show as they annihilated Pennridge 66-28 on Thanksgiving Day.

Five years later Quakertown came up with another find. Jay Poggi was one of the most successful backs to play here. He holds more school records than any other player to step onto Alumni Field.

These are just a few of the thrills to come to Alumni Field and there will be more to come...many more