



# Hellertown Historical Society

Dedicated to Preserving the History and Heritage of Hellertown and its People

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## Upcoming Events

HHS Annual Meeting – March 10 @ 6PM

*Keep Watch for Revisions and Updates*



*Feedback is essential for any publication to improve and grow. We welcome readers to provide their opinions, suggestions and comments about the content featured in our newsletter. Please send your feedback to the Editor at the email address below.*

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## A Look Back - HHS Pony Bridge Restoration is 20 Years Young



© Doddy Photography 2012

Can you believe it has been almost twenty years since the old Walnut Street bridge (aka The Pony Bridge) was restored? A few bridge facts...

- The 55-foot bridge formerly spanned the Saucon Creek on West Walnut Street. It was first used by horses and buggies, eventually by motor vehicles.
- It is a composite cast and wrought iron Pratt-truss span.
- The bridge was originally designed and patented by Francis J. Lowthorp in 1857.
- The bridge was fabricated by the Beckel Foundry and Machine Shop formerly of Bethlehem, PA.
- It is one of three fabricated by Beckel Foundry and the only one that still exists today.
- It remained in service until 1970, when it was moved to an adjacent location to permit a replacement bridge be built to accommodate school bus traffic from the merger of Hellertown and Lower Saucon Schools.
- In 1994, graduate students from Lehigh University assisted in the dismantling, restoring and re-assembly of the bridge, reopening in April 2000, now spanning the mill race.
- Rotted floor beams were replaced with longer-lasting white oak beams in 2012.

## Submit Articles or Stories

Hellertown Historical Society  
Newsletter seeks any stories or news  
articles pertaining to Hellertown's History  
and its people. Anyone is encouraged to  
submit articles, stories or news to the

newsletter Managing Editor for  
consideration in upcoming editions.  
Submissions may be edited for content  
and/or space requirements. Please use  
the contact information on this page to  
submit your entry.

The Hellertown Historical Society (HHS) Newsletter is published by the Hellertown Historical Society, 150 W. Walnut Street, Hellertown, PA 18055. Statements and opinions expressed in the HHS Newsletter articles and editorials do not necessarily represent the policies or opinions of the Hellertown Historical Society.



## President's Message:

Dear Members and Friends,  
As the year wraps up, I'd like to THANK YOU for your continued support in our 40<sup>th</sup> year as a historical society. Although we haven't seen many of

you while we stay safe and hold off on events and large gatherings, we're busy behind the scenes maintaining the Grist Mill site and preserving Hellertown's heritage.

While we will not be hosting any holiday events yet this year, stay tuned for our holiday musical program that will be pre-recorded and shared on our website and Facebook page. Our grounds will also be decorated for the season. We hope you will stop by, take photos, and enjoy the seasonal splendor.

As always, an extra THANK YOU to our dedicated volunteers. I'm lucky to get to work with all of you and appreciate your dedication to our organization.

Happy Holidays! We can't wait to see you in the New Year!

*Stacie Torkos, President*

### HHS Word Scramble

*By Dolores Stauffer Di Paolo*

Theme : December Holiday Items

GLDUSOA IRF  
ANRVOMIA RTSA  
TASR FO EHTELBHME  
ERHTE GAIM  
ASTNSA EDRNIERE  
EDAMEMOEH ODGOSEI  
KEPCLI  
ERET POT GLANEL  
WONS BGOSEL

Unscramble the above words.

Answers will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Answers to the last word scramble appear below. Congratulations to all who submitted the correct answers to the Editor:

**THEME:** Days and Events in Hellertown

OVEMI NI EHT KRPA  
**MOVIE IN THE PARK**  
PRSITI ARPDEA  
**SPIRIT PARADE**  
WKOSREIRF  
**FIREWORKS**  
MUNOCYITM YDA  
**COMMUNITY DAY**  
ETAHRGIE AYD  
**HERITAGE DAY**  
VNILAACR  
**CARNIVAL**  
GLITH PU GTINH  
**LIGHT UP NIGHT**

### HHS Cryptogram

*By Dolores Stauffer Di Paolo*

See if you can solve this "Hellertown Historical Society" Cryptogram. The answer will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter. If you cannot wait, send your answer to the Editor at the email address below for confirmation...

AERV EMPZ AEKHC DALXTHPZD  
SCLU AEK UQPAKW. AEKV EKWGKJ  
ACHU AER ACKK. HAD OKJ AHUK  
QPJ PLB AEKV JCKQU LS  
GCKDKPAD MPJKC AEK ACKK.  
UKCCV XECHDAUQD SCLU QWW OS  
MD QA EKWWKCALBP  
EHDALCHXQW DLXHKA V.

[editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org)

The last cryptogram appears below along with the answer. Congratulations to all who submitted the correct answer to the Editor.

CXLR GNZ IBUL B EXNAN BQVZI,  
**WHEN YOU MAKE A PHOTO ALBUM,**  
VL OZKL ANCKPAL CXN AXL  
**BE SURE TO WRITE WHO THE**  
ELNEQL BKL, NK AXL XPOANKPW  
**PEOPLE ARE, OR THE HISTORIC**  
OPYRPM PWBRL NR AXL  
**SIGNIFICANCE ON THE**  
VBWU NM AXL EXNAN.  
**BACK OF THE PHOTO.**  
MZAZKL YLRLKBAPNRO  
**FUTURE GENERATIONS**  
CPQQ AXBRU GNZ.  
**WILL THANK YOU.**

A=T

### You Can Make A Permanent Mark on Hellertown Historical Society's Future

Recently, the Hellertown Historical Society received a large bequest from a long-time resident of Hellertown. The Board is extremely grateful for this bequest especially after experiencing the downturns associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

That bequest prompted the resurrection of an article on the subject that was published in this newsletter about 5 years ago. What was true then is still true now. Please consider.....

\* \* \* \* \*

Members tell us the friendships they formed and the experiences they had growing up in Hellertown continue to have a strong and lasting impact on their lives. One of the questions we receive most often from members is "How can we do more to preserve those memories for future generations?"

As you know, the mission of Hellertown Historical Society is to preserve Hellertown's heritage. In today's economic environment it is a daily challenge to raise the funds necessary for a nonprofit organization – like Hellertown Historical Society – to support the buildings, grounds, research materials, displays, etc., that make us such a valuable community treasure.

We understand that tight family budgets affect charitable giving, but there is a way you can support Hellertown Historical Society and ensure a strong future for the organization: **Simply include Hellertown Historical Society as a**

**beneficiary in your Will, Life Insurance, or Retirement Plan.**

By directing a portion of your estate to the Hellertown Historical Society you are making a permanent mark on the future of the organization. Your support will ensure the Society will face the future in a stronger financial position, continue to provide resources that will preserve history, and provide tools for research and education of future generations of Hellertonians.

First...please discuss your gift with your attorney and/or financial consultant. Then, contact Gil Stauffer, Treasurer or Stacie Torkos, President at Hellertown Historical Society for additional information.

*Hellertown Historical Society is a 501c3 nonprofit organization*

## The Status of Our Flagship Software

About 4 years ago the Hellertown Historical Society purchased a software program, called *Past Perfect*, designed specifically to digitize, record, and track archived materials that reside in museums and Historical Society's...just like ours.

You have no idea how much memorabilia Hellertown residents have donated to the Historical Society. Whatever quantity you are thinking, double it...no triple it. The amount of objects, photographs, and archival material is staggering. And, to put it in perspective...the society only accepts donated material that is directly related to Hellertown and to the preservation of Hellertown's heritage.

Keeping track of donated material has been a painstaking job from the first day (way back in 1980) the Society began accepting donations. Each needed to be recorded in a ledger that contained date donated, by whom, and a brief explanation of the item. Then it was assigned a tracking number and placed in storage (or perhaps placed on display in the museum).

When a request was received by a researcher or interested party for

background information concerning a particular archived donation, a society volunteer would manually go through the various handwritten ledgers to produce the requested information. Multiple requests could take hours or days, or longer. Fast forward to today.

Two Hellertown Historical Society volunteers... Greg Stauffer and Dolores Stauffer Di Paolo... have spent 3 or 4 hours a day – 2 days a week – for over 4 years entering every type of Hellertown related memorabilia imaginable into Past Perfect. By their count, the two of them have digitally recorded thousands upon thousands of objects, photographs, etc. into a program that provides for nearly instant recall just by entering a name, a description, or a situation (or even a partial name or description).

*About a year ago a phone call was received from a former Hellertown resident who now resides in another state. He wondered if we had a photograph of the Reinhard School playground that was constructed from wood and old tires by volunteers. While he was on the phone, in a few seconds Greg located the requested photograph on Past Perfect and with a few keystrokes emailed the photo to the caller.*

This is just a brief example of the power of Past Perfect and the professional service Hellertown Historical Society can provide and is providing to members and researchers.

There is no question that this 21<sup>st</sup> century software is taking the Hellertown Historical Society to the next level in preserving Hellertown's Heritage, yet the initiative to digitize all of archived material is far from finished. Even after four years, Greg and Dolores estimate that less than 20% of the Society's archived items

have been entered into the Past Perfect system

While the purpose of this article is to give you a report on the status of technology at the Society, there is no question that this huge project could definitely benefit from additional volunteers. Greg and Dolores have gotten all the bugs out of the system and have full knowledge on its operations. Now, the project is ready for additional people.

Could that person be you?

## The Paving of Hellertown's Main Street

In 1989, Nancy Sutton – Corresponding Secretary of Hellertown Historical Society – prepared a written presentation entitled “Walking With Amy Down Main Street.” Amy was an imaginary “little gray mouse” who appeared throughout the document at strategic points with background comments on the various Hellertown structures and businesses of the time.

One of Amy's historical presentations in the document concerned the paving of Hellertown's Main Street. Perhaps these are facts that you never knew....

*“Prior to 1924, Main Street was an unpaved road. However, if the Bethlehem Daily Times was accurate in its report of February 17, 1887 stating that “The mud is hub deep in the country, but here in town, where we have cinder-macadamized streets, there is little mud,” it would seem to indicate that our early borough fathers took fairly good care of their main thoroughfare.*

*The paving of Main Street in 1923-1924 was a project undertaken by the newly formed Hellertown Business Men's Association. At their meeting of May 17, 1921 the question of improving Main Street was discussed and a committee composed*

of Fred Keilman, Dr. William H. Rentzheimer, Christian Pfeiffer, Titus M. Ruch, and Pliny Bergstresser was appointed to investigate the sentiment of the public in the matter.

At a special meeting held June 14, 1921, Ambrose J. Welker (who later in 1923 became Chief Burgess of Hellertown) presented blank forms to Borough Council, furnished by the State Highway Department, which were then executed by the proper Borough Officials asking for state and county aid for the improvement of Main Street.

The matter was brought up at every meeting from that time until May 16, 1922 when a committee was formed consisting of Welker, G. A. Kleck, H.G. C. Hoffert, T. M. Ruch and V. S. Wagner to see that all preliminary arrangements for the work was carried out. Shortly after this time a contract was signed by the proper borough officials for the paving of the road and the work of the Hellertown Business Men's Association in the project was ended.

On November 8, 1922 the citizens of Hellertown endorsed the improvement at the polls by voting 351-22 to increase the Borough's indebtedness by \$60,000 to pay Hellertown's portion of the cost. Work on Main Street was begun in the summer of 1923 and the entire project was completed in the Spring of 1924. Later that same year the highway was paved farther south to the Buck's County Line."

There you have it...a bit of Hellertown trivia that you can tell your friends about and impress them to no end. All with the help of Nancy Sutton and Amy – the little gray mouse!

## November 15, 1897...

*Courtesy Morning Call Newspaper*

### FROM DOWN VALLEY

**Items Gathered in the Bethlehems and Vicinity.**

### NEW TROLLEY LINE IS OPEN

**Through Allentown Enterprise South Bethlehem and Hellertown are Connected – First Car Run on Saturday.**

*Pascoe and Crilly on Saturday ran the first trolley car over their new line from South Bethlehem to Hellertown. General Manager Walters and Superintendent Utd. Of the Traction Company, Francis Crilly and Councilman John Hart, of South Bethlehem, accompanied Mesers, Pascoe and Crilly on the first trip. All along the line the car was received with enthusiasm and this was especially the case at Hellertown. It required exactly six weeks to build the four and one-half miles of road.*

*President Crilly and Sol Stephens had a bet of \$5 on the completion of the road within eight weeks. Mr. Stephens said it could not be done. Hon. Jeremiah Hess was the stakeholder and on Saturday was ready to hand over the envelope to President Crilly, but the latter directed that Mr. Hess should divide the ten dollars among the churches in Hellertown.*

*At Matey's Hotel, at the end of the Bethlehem iron works, the road starts from the end of the Traction road. It continues along the old Philadelphia road to Iron Hill, across the Saucon Creek, where the company has built a bridge of their own. The track extends along the left side of the public road until the borough line is reached when the track extends along the middle of the street.*

*The main track is practically completed with the exception of building four turnouts. It is ballasted with slag from the Bethlehem iron works and the roadbed is pronounced a good one. Sometime this week the road will be opened for travel. Two or three regular cars will be run on this line and the fare one way will be five cents.*

*It is the intention of the company to place a curve in the track and go out Durham street, Hellertown to Rentzheim's grove, about three-fourths of a mile beyond the borough. This is a very pretty grove and will make a fine picnic ground. Besides there is a large natural cave there, which contains quite a lake upon which the Hellertown boys often place a boat. This will make a popular resort for summer travel.*

## Shopping Smile Amazon Helps Fund HHS

*By Don Mills*

With the Christmas shopping season already underway, there is a method that your gift purchases will help Hellertown Historical Society and it costs NOTHING for you to participate. With the current pandemic, many people are utilizing online shopping, so this fund-raising method is perfect!

Amazon offers a special method for raising funds for non-profits and charitable organizations called "Amazon Smile". It works the same way as the regular Amazon website except that half of one percent of your total purchase is sent directly to the charitable/non-profit organizations. The price you pay for your items is the same as usual and there are no additional charges when shopping with this method. The only issue is that you must be sure to use the "Amazon Smile" website to make your purchases. If you do not use this website and use the regular Amazon website, no funding will be transferred.

While the half of one percent does not sound like much, if more and more people use this website when making purchases, the amount of funds raised could be substantial. Just for example, all of MY shopping through this website for this year (2021 only) has raised nearly \$40, and I still have more Christmas shopping to do. Multiply that by 20, 30, 60 or 100 people and you can understand how much an impact it would make. You need not stop using this method once the Holidays are over. By using this method for all your Amazon purchases, you continually fund HHS – again, AT NO COST TO YOU!!

There are instructions on our website to guide you through using the Amazon Smile method of making purchases. View these by clicking "Support HHS" from the selections

along the top of the page, then select “Amazon Smile” from the sub-menu. The instructions include descriptive explanations as well as graphic displays of the website and where to enter your information. If you have a current Amazon account, simply log in with your information. If you do not have an Amazon account, there are instructions on their website to create one. Should you need further clarification or assistance, you may contact me at [editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:editor@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org) and I’ll gladly help you.

I hope many of you take advantage of this method to help raise much needed funding for Hellertown Historical Society during this very difficult time.

## You Can Make a QCD

Wow, that’s exciting! I can now make a QCD! But, what the heck is a QCD?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 made permanent qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from individual retirement accounts. A QCD permits annual direct transfers to a qualified charity (such as the Hellertown Historical Society) totaling up to \$100,000 of tax deferred IRA savings...tax free.

If you are over the age of 70 and a half, depending on your personal tax situation, donating from your IRA to the Hellertown Historical Society could have more tax advantages for you than a direct personal donation.

While legislation repeatedly uses the maximum amount of \$100,000 in its language, any contribution amount that is right for your financial situation will be greatly appreciated.

Setting up the contribution is not complicated. Contact the custodian who manages your IRA account (for example your financial institution, insurance company, etc).

Then, give the custodian written instructions to make a donation directly from your IRA to the Hellertown Historical Society.

To reap the tax advantages of a QCD, it is important the check be made payable to the Hellertown Historical Society. Should you decide to make a donation to the Hellertown Historical Society from your IRA, please call us at 610-838-1770 (ask for Stacie Torkos, president or Gil Stauffer, treasurer) to inform us of your plans. We will be happy to interact with your custodian concerning mailing instructions, etc. We will also provide you with a letter for your records acknowledging your QCD donation.

*We strongly suggest you contact your attorney, tax advisor, financial advisor, or tax accountant to determine the financial impact of your QCD donation and discuss if a QCD is right for you. Hellertown Historical Society is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.*

## Covid Pandemic Cancels Holiday Open House and Other Activities

With great reluctance, the Hellertown Historical Society Board of Directors decided not to hold the traditional Annual Holiday Open House and Shopping at the Mill this year. Both these events are extremely popular with our period Holiday décor, the running of toy trains and a visit from Santa Claus and they draw many members and guests each time. Unfortunately, with the current pandemic situation and guidelines from health organizations, we felt it would not be prudent to gather in large groups where the potential risk of transmission is raised. This was not a decision that was made in haste. The Board explored alternative methods to reduce the risks but could not find suitable alternatives that maintain the current guidelines for

gatherings and distribution of refreshments and beverages safely. We are saddened as many of you probably are as well with this news. The importance of maintaining a safe environment for our facility and our members and guests outweigh the desire to celebrate these traditions. There will be future Holiday Open Houses and other events which we will all be able to enjoy once the pandemic risk is reduced to a safe level or completely eradicated. Until then, we wish all of you a very safe and enjoyable holiday season to enjoy with your families and friends.

## Hellertown Historical Society Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of members of the Hellertown Historical Society will be held on Thursday, March 10, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Society’s Tavern Room located in the lower level of the Grist Mill, 150 W. Walnut Street, Hellertown, PA.

The annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors.

Nominations to fill expired terms of members of Board of Directors will be accepted.

Members and friends of the Hellertown Historical Society are invited to attend.

## Hometown Hero Banners

The Borough of Hellertown is accepting new entries for its Hometown Hero Banner Program.

Families, or sponsors, may elect to honor their military Hometown Hero with a banner to be erected on one of many utility poles in Hellertown.

The banners remain in place for two years after which they are removed and returned to the family or sponsor. Information may be found on the Borough’s website or call them 610-838-7041.

## Hellertown's Distinct and Historic Homes - #5

A new series featuring distinctive and historic homes in Hellertown – Answer to this home will appear in the next issue

Look at the home on left side circa 1925 and see if you recognize the same home at its current site and condition...



## Hellertown's Distinct and Historic Homes - #4 Answer

A new series featuring distinctive and historic homes in Hellertown

This was the home of John A Laubach, son of the first Burgess of Hellertown, Thomas R. Laubach, at 519 Main Street on the corner with Penn Street.



### HHS To Post Holiday Program Video Online

Due to the Covid pandemic forcing the Annual Holiday Open House at the Tavern Room from being held, we are recording a Holiday Program video to be posted on our website for visitors to view at their convenience. This video will feature the usual Holiday-themed music and entertainment as our Annual Open House would feature. The recording of the show is scheduled to occur Tuesday December 14. It should be available shortly thereafter on our website. Check our website and/or Facebook page when it is posted and available. We understand the frustration and disappointment of missing our usual live performance. We hope our members and friends will enjoy this video in lieu of that.

**“Best Wishes from all of us at Hellertown Historical Society for a Safe, Happy and Healthy Holiday Season and Prosperous New Year with Family and Friends”**