



Hellertown Historical Society

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

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Upcoming Holiday Events

Holiday Open House – Dec. 4 7PM
(Snow Date Dec. 5)

Shopping at the Mill – Dec. 13 Noon-4PM

Santa Visits The Mill – Dec. 13 Noon-4PM

Model Train Display – Sundays Dec. 6-20
Noon-4PM

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HHS Members L-R Harry Boos, Andrea Danner, Nikki Martucci, President Stacie Torkos, Treasurer Gil Stauffer and Past President Earl Hill

Saucon Valley Community Day Crowd Keeps HHS Busy, 35th Anniversary Upcoming

by Don Mills

The Saucon Valley Community Day 2015 held in August was one of the busiest on record for the Historical Society. The HHS tent was abuzz with activities providing outreach hand-outs to inform passersby about our organization. We also were selling our signature grilled hot dogs and cold beverages, and just plain meeting new faces and talking with old friends. Many local regulars stopped to say 'Hi' and talk just for the sake of passing time on what was a beautiful summer day.

A special thank you goes to the HHS volunteers who took time from their own schedules to handle organizing and implementing of this event for the Society.

The Society will celebrate our 35 year anniversary in 2016. We are currently planning some appropriate events to acknowledge the milestone. Please keep watch for those when they are announced.

As always, anyone may become a member of the Society. You may send an email, check our website or call for info about joining.

Submit Articles or Stories

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

news to the newsletter 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.



Hellertown Historical Society
President Stacie Torkos

President's Message:

At this time last year, I asked you to consider making an end-of-year donation to help us acquire Past Perfect software...a software application that is used by many historical societies across the nation.

As president of the Hellertown Historical Society, I am pleased to report the organization's "dream" to purchase this special software has become reality! This comprehensive software package will track all of our artifact donations and our hundreds of historical photographs and articles. It will even maintain a database of members, donors, and friends of the society. We are very, very excited!

Obtaining *Past Perfect* was the first major step in improving community access to the historical archives entrusted to our care. Our next step is to ensure the actual artifacts, photographs, and articles are secured in folders, containers, etc. that will

preserve these historical items for generations. Unfortunately, these specially manufactured acid-free folders, boxes, etc. are expensive. As a result, we need your help! Once again, please consider making a year-end donation to the Hellertown Historical Society! As before, we will follow your instructions and restrict your donation to the specific purchase you designate, such as purchase of specially manufactured acid-free boxes, folders, etc. Thank you...and best wishes for a wonderful holiday season. – *Stacie Torkos*

PS: It's always fun to have multiple choices. You may want to consider supporting our efforts to refurbish and restore the First Hellertown Jail (see related article in this newsletter). As before, you can restrict your donation to be designated for the items mentioned above, the jail restoration or any variety of other specific uses by including a notation signifying your desire.

Speaker Series 2015 Continues with Fire, Water & Ice – Part 2

by *Andrea Danner*

On September 17th, our guests filled the Tavern Room for a walk down memory lane with local historian and author, Dan Ruth. Dan was kind enough to put together some of his old 33 mm films and came up with a wonderful presentation. The evening was thoroughly enjoyable!

Those of us from the HHS really enjoyed seeing pictures of the Heller-Wagner Grist Mill in winter. The "Ice" was footage of skating on the pond. Many of us enjoyed skating on the old pond in winters past. The "Water" portion of the night was seeing the opening of the Hellertown Pool. We had a display in the foyer featuring one of the old pool baskets. The late Betty McManus, a HHS founder, used to share memories with us about how

she worked there and assigned baskets to everyone. Then Dan treated us to a day at the pool from the 1960's. It was just an average day that he attended the pool with his family, but in hindsight seems like a perfect day! As a kid, it wasn't summer until you went to the pool and jumped off the high dive or got a delicious 5 or 10 cent Popsicle treat at the snack bar!

Dan also shared video memories of the Old Dewey Fire House, which was located on Saucon Street, near the Community Center. The "Fire" part of the presentation was exciting as we got to see the firefighters in action. We are lucky that someone filmed all of these Hellertown memories and equally lucky Dan Ruth has put them together in a power point presentation for us all to enjoy...and the background music is great too!

If you enjoy Hellertown memories, you will enjoy Dan's new

book, in collaboration with Karen Samuels and Lee Wiedner, Images of America, Saucon Valley. If you missed purchasing your copy at the event, we currently have them in stock at the Miller's house.

Society to Repair and Restore Hellertown's First Jail

by *Gil Stauffer*

Remember the song from our younger days - possibly the early fifties - that went something like this..."time you're a villain, time you're a thief, time you stole your love from me and now I'm...." well...you get the idea. Time is what the Society is all about...that is preservation of all the many items and memories that collectively make up our historical past.

One of those items from our historical past is Hellertown's first jail. If today you took a survey

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of Hellertown residents and asked the question “Where is Hellertown’s first jail located?” you will probably receive either blank stares or a sheepish “I didn’t realize Hellertown’s first jail was still in existence.” Of course if the same question was asked of older, native Hellertonians the percentage of those in the know would probably increase.



Hellertown's First Jail
(Courtesy Google Earth)

The jail, which is over 100 years old, has an interesting history. The following is an excerpt from an article written by Alice Lesoravage that appeared in the February 1984 issue of the Morning Call:

Hellertown’s first jail built in 1872 by Thomas R. Laubach, the first chief burgess, is being donated to

the Hellertown Historical Society. It will be the society’s first building acquisition.

The stone jailhouse structure, located just off Penn Street along Silver Creek, is being donated by Elizabeth Hess of Hellertown, widow of the late Howard Hess, a borough mayor who served from 1946 to 1949 and a descendent of Laubach. Hess, who also served as a Northampton County Commissioner, restored the landmark building and maintained it until his death last July.

The property and approximately 12 by 14 foot structure which served as the town lock-up for 28 years will be deeded to the society after the property is surveyed later this year, according to a society member. It is believed that the jail, which was replaced by cells in the borough municipal building, was used primarily by transients and others who paid the borough for their stay by working on streets.

Unfortunately in the 32 years since this article was written, time has been a “villain” and the old lock-up is suffering the ill

effects of a leaking roof and other weather-related damages.

Because the jail is physically located some distance from the society’s main campus, maintenance of the structure and grounds is an on-going challenge that needs to be addressed and solved. While moving the jail to society grounds has been explored, the costs incurred in such a move would be prohibitive and well beyond the society’s financial resources.

During the October Board of Directors’ Meeting the Board voted to make emergency repairs to the structure as soon as possible; and, to seek estimates for permanent repairs and restoration during 2016. The Board also instructed that funds be allocated in the 2016 budget to accomplish these tasks.

Hellertown’s first jail is an important part of our community’s history and heritage. We will keep you posted on progress of repair and restoration efforts via www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org and 2016 issues of this newsletter.

In celebration of Veteran’s Day 2015, this item seems most appropriate to include in this edition of the Newsletter...

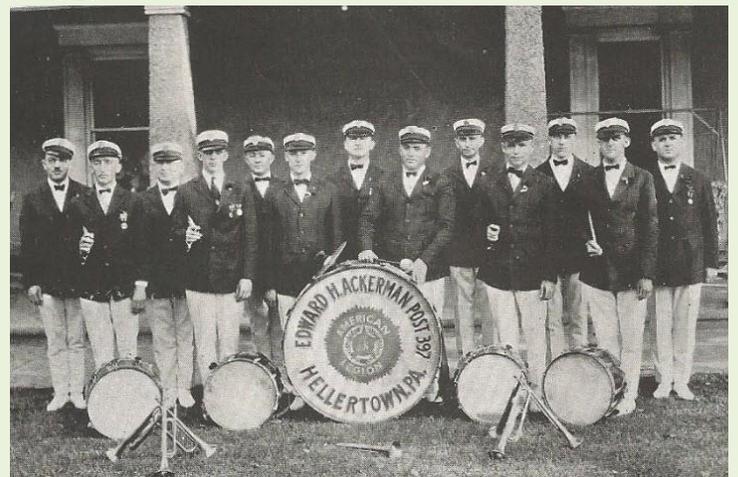
Edward H. Ackerman Post 397, American Legion

Reprinted from HHS Archives

The Edward H. Ackerman Post 397, American Legion, came into being, Friday, August 22, 1919, when the first meeting was held in the Wolfe School Auditorium.

The meeting was called to order by Charles T. Wasser as temporary chairman and William H. Wack as temporary secretary. Forty-five service men were present and at the organization the following officers were elected for the new Post: Clarence J. Clarke, Commander; Asher S. Kichline, Vice Commander; William H. Wack, Adjutant; Herbert S. Weisel, Finance Officer; Charles T. Wasser, Chaplain; Thomas A. Peffer, Historian. An application for a

temporary charter was made, and issued on October 16, 1919. The permanent charter was received in the early part of 1920.



Edward H. Ackerman Post 397 American Legion
(Circa 1919)

A 'Society' Christmas Story

by Gloria Michael & Don Mills

It's not too far away to be thinking about the upcoming Holidays. They will be here before you know it. The Hellertown Historical Society has several events planned to not only get you in the spirit, but to help with the last minute gift ideas.

Our **Holiday Open House**, scheduled for **Friday December 4 at 7PM**, will certainly get you in the spirit. Planned activities include tours of the historic facility featuring period holiday decor, complimentary light refreshments, live musical entertainment featuring seasonal songs and dance, a model train display and much, much more. All of this will be held in the ADA-accessible Tavern Room in the lower level of the historic Heller-Wagner Grist Mill. So grab some cookies and a hot beverage at the buffet table, take a seat in the Tavern near the warm fire and listen to the wonderful sounds of the season performed live by the Lehigh Valley Idols, or just talk with old and new friends alike. This event is free to attend and all are welcome to join in the fun and festivities. Free parking is available to the rear of the Miller House, adjacent to the Tavern entrance and across the street near the Rail Trail. **A snow date of Saturday, December 5 has been set aside, just in case.**

Christmas Shopping At The Mill

To further get you in the spirit and help with those last minute gift ideas, we offer **Shopping at the Mill** on **Sunday December 13 from Noon-4PM**. The



O Tannenbaum



Lehigh Valley Idols



The Shoppes at the Mill



Santa Visits the Tavern Room



HHS Train Engineers



Hellertown Replica Buildings

shoppes at the Mill, located in the Tavern Room, offer many local vendors with unique gift ideas for those hard-to-find folks on your list. Such items as handmade jewelry, accessories, candy and more will be sold at this event.

Santa's Coming To Town

If need to take a break during your shopping, we will have complimentary light refreshments available to rest by a warm fire, maybe catch up with a few friends too. And if you can't find that gift for that one special person, or you forgot to give Santa your list, here's your chance to do so in person. **Santa visits the Tavern Room, also December 13 Noon-4PM**, while the shopping continues. Kids of all ages are welcome to stop by and try to convince the jolly old elf how good they have been all year. Photos with Santa will also be available for a minimal fee.

The Trains Roll Into HHS

Kids, and Dads too, will love the **Model Train Display** in the basement of the Miller House, adjacent to the Grist Mill. The train display will debut during the **Holiday Open House** and also run on Sundays, **December 6-20, Noon-4PM, weather-permitting**. Be sure to stop in and see the replica models of some of Hellertown's buildings constructed from scratch and donated to the Society from long-time Hellertown resident Roger Shaffer. **Please note, the basement of the Miller House is not ADA accessible.**

Pennsylvania is known as the "Snack Food Capital of the World." With major producers of pretzels, potato chips, confectioneries, and chocolate, Pennsylvania's snack food and confectionery industries generate more than \$5.1 billion in sales annually. Pennsylvania is also the international headquarters for Hershey Foods Corporation and H. J. Heinz.