

ANNUAL 2020 UPDATE THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Updates since the July 2019 meeting

I recall my Grandmother Anna Pratt telling me about her memories of the Spanish Flu Epidemic in 1918-1920, when she was a young 9-11 year old. The particular story I remember revolved around the presence of roadblocks by neighborhood or town groups to prevent outsiders from entering the area. It was thought this would help prevent the introduction of this illness to that area. Fortunately we have not had blockades of our towns and villages, but our nation has certainly closed its borders to a degree. As historians, we should all be recording aspects of this unique

experience for future reference and even possibly for lessons learned. The impact of this COVID-19 Virus Pandemic on our nursing homes and assisted living facilities is certainly noteworthy. Personally as a society, we can attest to it, as our own Curtis Stone has been quarantined in Gracious Living Assisted Living Facility in South Montrose, since this pandemic emergency was declared by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



The Board of Trustees and BHS members at our last annual meeting in July 2019



The Board of Trustees/Officers annual meeting July 18, 2020

For a time, we all were forced to stay at home, other than essential needs, and most of our “non-essential businesses” had to close. On June 26th our county was declared “Green” by the Governor and we were able to start trending back to the “new normal.” Unfortunately that new normal does not include having our traditional annual summer meeting. The executive officers of the Society met on the 18th of July at the home of Richard Zick Sr. and decided we would not meet in person this year. Instead this historic year, we will have to do with this newsletter.

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Martins Creek Viaduct scenic overlook site under development

The past year, our primary focus has continued to be on developing the Martins Creek Viaduct Bridge Overlook on Zick Hill in Brooklyn Township. The property owner and the Brooklyn Township Supervisors have been very helpful in this effort, providing the land and numerous loads of fill to develop a pull off where cars and visitors can view the historic bridge. Verbiage for the sign has been developed along with copies of historic photos of the bridge history. Molenko's Sign Shop in Brooklyn is the lead on the sign verbiage and display. Additional fill is coming as this newsletter is being written, and a large dead maple tree has been cut-down and is to be moved. The tree was a real threat to the sign once installed. Next will be assembly of a nice concrete product on site by Masters Concrete Products. These will serve as safety barriers for vehicles. A liability protection insurance package has been purchased and a formal letter of permission by the property owner provided to the Township Supervisors and Society.

Two additional monetary grants for this site have been realized since last year's (2019) award of a \$1,895.81 grant by the Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau. COVID-19 has caused this grant's term to be extended by a year. In addition, we now have realized a grant of \$1,000 from Peoples Security Charitable Foundation, and more recently a \$3,000 grant from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region. All are meant as matching grants, which will require the Society to contribute to the overall effort via our own funds or in-kind contributions (volunteer labor). We have until August 31, 2021 to complete the project.



Current Township Building

Another building effort of sorts that the officers of the society continue to follow is the erection of a new Brooklyn Township Building. The Township Supervisors have committed to providing the society a space in any new building/property as well as space in a new park building that MIGHT replace the current Township Building. Richard Zick Sr. has been a regular attendee at the monthly Township Supervisors meeting, while representing the society and the Township taxpayers.

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This past fall several of us also attended the Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust (DFCLT) Symposium at Keystone College in LA Plume. The Brooklyn Historical Society has had a relationship with the Dennis Farm going back to at least 1987, when a number of members volunteered to restore the stones walls at the cemetery. Recently some photos of that event was discovered and are pictured here.



Pictured above are Robert Stanton (center) and Dave Palmer (extreme right) in approximately 1987 restoring the cemetery perimeter wall. If you know the identity of the other two individuals, let us know

The Dennis Farm continues to develop as a premiere historical treasure not only in our area but world-wide. The Trust is also coordinating its efforts with Mt View High School and developing a unique history program focused on the evolution of a free African American family in 18th Century America that continues to this day. Following the fall 2019 symposium, the Society donated \$1,000 to the DFCLT, to be applied to their capital campaign. In December 2019, the DFCLT received a \$1,200,000 National Endowment for the Humanities matching grant. More recently the DFCLT has been chosen as a 2020 grant recipient on the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) (NTHP) through its African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. This grant will be used to restore the stonewall foundation of the Dennis Farmhouse, the first step toward transforming the farmhouse to a museum. The Dennis Farm Family is a jewel in Brooklyn Township and one which the BHS will

continue to support. Please consider making a contribution to this fundraising effort. For more information, visit thedennisfarm.org





Strengthening the War of 1812 Veterans memorial at the old Westside Cemetery, courtesy of Kenny Mason and Sons.



The War of 1812 veterans sign was completed at the old Westside Cemetery in Brooklyn this summer, courtesy of Alex Kozlowski and Richard Zick, Sr.



The society was pleased to see the ancient barn on the John and Ann Corbin property was meticulously dismantled and repurposed this past year, rather than demolished and wasted. It's remains will live on for other purposes. Meanwhile a new attractive and modern barn has been erected in its place along with a new home in Brooklyn, for John Corbin III and Courtney House.

Ancient barn at the John and Ann Corbin property being dismantled and repurposed

The preservation of family history is a significant purpose of the Brooklyn Historical Society and one that continues to attract attention from members and non-members alike. Recently a Phil Jones a resident of the Valley Forge area contacted us with a large number of photos taken by his Grandfather Glen Ely in the early 20th Century. Phil Jones' mother was Martha Ely, the only daughter of Glenn Ely. A few of those are attached here for your consumption. They are delicious depictions of the early 20th Century in Brooklyn as well as some of Kingsley, Hop Bottom and Nicholson.



A young Glenn Ely circa 1900.



A country wagon train. Could it be U.S. Mail, or the early school children wagons noted for Brooklyn?



Oley Osborne Pratt and his wife, Elizabeth Sophrona (Lord) Pratt.

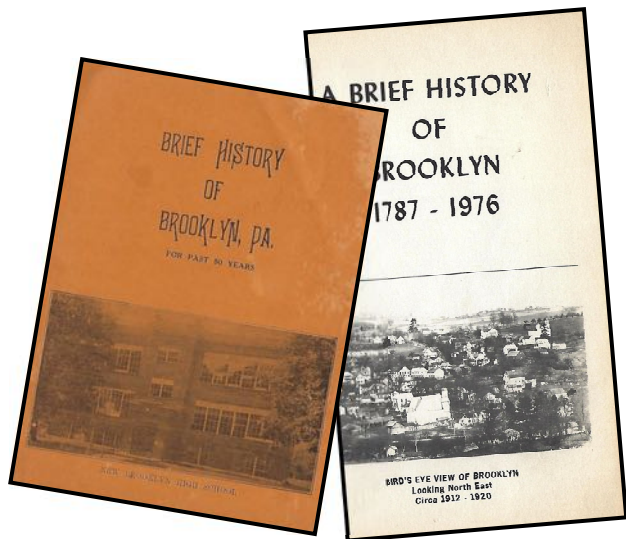
Family history and genealogy has always been one of my personal satisfactions in being a member of our Brooklyn Historical Society. At every opportunity, I search for and welcome evidence of my lineage and ancestors. I recently found a photo taken in July 1950, in my mother's estate. It is of my Great Grandfather Oley Osborne Pratt and his wife- Great Grandma Elizabeth Sophrona (Lord) Pratt. While they are not connected to Brooklyn Township directly, Great Grandpa Oley Pratt was the son of Asa Louis Pratt and Lillis Elizabeth (Conrad) Pratt. Lillis is the great grand-daughter of Wilhelm Conrad, one of the original Brooklyn settlers in 1787. Wilhelm was a Hessian soldier, who deserted in Mt Holly New Jersey in 1778. Following the Revolutionary War, he chose to remain and become an American citizen. He died in 1832 and is buried in the Bell Cemetery on Route 92 in Lennox Township.



Home of Harland Mead in Brooklyn Township.

Another fascinating find was a photo from the early 20th Century of my Uncle Harland Mead's home in Brooklyn Township. Uncle Harland (who I remember well) was the son of James Henry Mead and Ella Gere. He is a half brother to my Great Grand Mother Bernice Idell (Mead) Robinson, who's mother was Cora Squier.

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Richard Zick Sr. has also experienced the joy of receipt of historic memorabilia. Recently, Narola Jones Rosenberg of Lake Placid, Florida sent him some material including a "Brief History of Brooklyn 1787-1976" and a "Brief History of Brooklyn, PA. For Past 50 Years. The former looks to be a product of efforts by The History Committee of Harold Banker, Pauline Mead, Nora Bishop, Marie Tiffany, and Frank Ely. The latter is that of a History Committee in 1940 of Mrs Edna Otto, W.S. Giles, Miriam Terry, G.H. Terry, H.H. Craver, Mrs. Street, Pauline Fish, E.F. Ely, W.S. Burbank, Robert Bertholf, Mary

Kent, and Martha Otto. These documents will be preserved in our Society archives. One of the documents speaks of the construction of the Telford type road from Hop Bottom to Brooklyn constructed in the early 20th Century. This Telford construction was very unique and resulted in one of the first paved roads in Susquehanna County. A photo of that road is provided here. It was taken about one-half mile north of Hop Bottom, on what we now know as State Route 167.

More recently some historic preservation was accomplished by the Society in cooperation with The Williams Companies Inc. A few years ago a field stone memorial to 13 year old Herman Sterling erected in 1880 by his father, was lost during construction of a gas lien right-of-way. Gordon Pratt, the property owner agreed with Williams Companies to replace it with a modern version in coordination with the



Former Robinson Farm on Brooklyn Road.

Brooklyn Historical Society. Birchard Monument was contracted to replace the monument. It was just dedicated on August 3, 2020 in a simple ceremony led by Reverend Lucas Taylor of the First Universalist Church of Brooklyn. Herman is buried in the old Universalist Cemetery (present day Mt View Cemetery). His parents



Herman Sterling Memorial, Brooklyn Township

were members of the First Universalist Church of Brooklyn. Thank you Williams Companies.



Left to right: Chris Spence, Riley Birchard, Ned Birchard, and Ashley Birchard

The First Universalist Church has been a presence in Brooklyn since 1824 and earlier in various congregant's homes. It continues to attract state and national attention to the community as one of the last of six (6) remaining historically Universalist Churches in

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Pennsylvania, as exemplified in its hosting last fall's 188th annual meeting of the Trustees of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention (TPUC). Representatives from Girard, Smithton, Philadelphia, Reading, and Athens-Sheshequin assembled to continue the tradition and heritage of Universalism in Pennsylvania. The event attracted the National President of the 1,000+ member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) - The Reverend Doctor Susan Frederick-Gray.



Trustees and Members of the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention, Brooklyn, PA, October 2019

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PUBLICATIONS INFORMATION

The latest publication of the Brooklyn Historical Society, The History of Brooklyn, PA 1787-2005, is now available. Cost: \$15.00. 270 pages; over 200 pictures. (Hard Cover edition: \$25.00.)

Other publications also available:

+Brooklyn Bicentennial Picture Book \$5.00.

+Brooklyn Township Schools 1800-1991 (\$10.00)

+Farms, Homes, and Unimproved Lands of Brooklyn, PA. (Traces ownership of property back to 1890.) (\$5.00)

+Weston's A History of Brooklyn, Pennsylvania. (1787-1887) Re-published 1987. (\$50.00)

+The Martin's Creeek Viaduct * the D.L.&W. Railroad in Alford, Kingsley & Hop Bottom, Pennsylvania, USA 100 Years Ago. (Author: Dr. John Darcy II.) (\$20.00)

Add \$3.00 mailing fee for each publication.

DUES FORM: {Return to Brooklyn Historical Society, c/o Jacqueline Thomas, 36 Kent Cross Road, Hop Bottom, PA 18824.} e-mail: jthomas@epix.net

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*David Palmer, Rev. Lucas Taylor,
Vince Cruciani*

The COVID-19 Pandemic has forced the society to conduct business in some unprecedented ways. At the July 18th officer and trustee meeting mentioned early in this newsletter, it was decided to submit written ballots in the newsletter for selection of officers and trustees. You will find a separate ballot inserted with this newsletter. Please fill it in with your choices and return to David Palmer as noted on the form. Please submit your dues and ballot by September 25th.

These times have presented some significant challenges to the society, but we will overcome, much as our ancestors did during the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918-1920. Though we may be separated physically from meeting, we have the ability to meet and communicate throughout the year on our FACEBOOK page. See you there, if not sooner.

Finally, thank you for allowing me to lead the society for the past five years. I look forward to many more years with this society as a member and contributor.

Very Respectfully,
DAVID J PALMER, President

BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
36 KENT CROSS ROAD
BROOKLYN, PA 18824

