

PO Box 154, Kingsley, PA 18826

## ANNUAL 2021 UPDATE

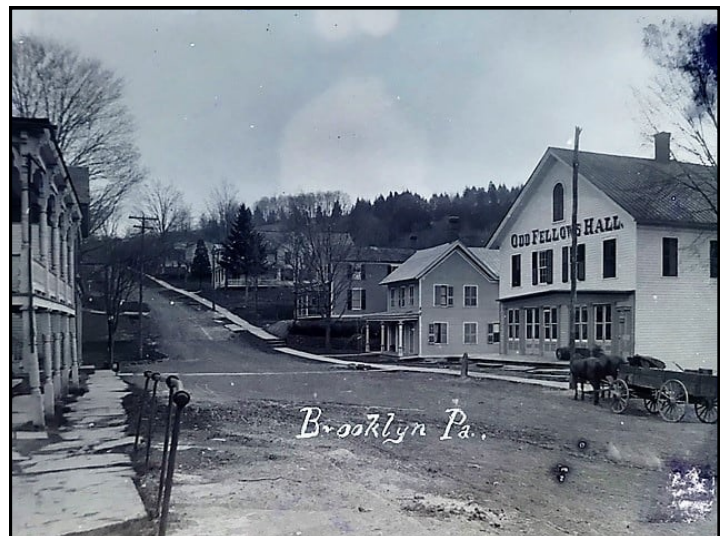
### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to express my sincerest gratitude to the members of the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) for electing me current President of the Society at the end of 2020. I grew up on the hill above Brooklyn on Kingsley Road across from Mountain View Cemetery, sometimes known as Hill Cemetery. I attended Brooklyn Elementary School and graduated from Mountain View High School. I attended Penn State and later earned a PhD from the State University of New York at Binghamton (Binghamton University). You may know me as the guy who wrote the Martin's Creek Viaduct (bridge) book back in 2015. I look forward to serving as President and am honored to be part of this remarkable organization.

I also want to recognize two newly elected officers of BHS, Patty Button and Jacquelyn Holgate. Patty Button was elected Secretary of the Society last autumn but has been involved with BHS since 2014. At that time she was recruited by our two BHS Trustees, Richard A. Zick and David Palmer, as well as Richard Zick II to help shepherd the Martin's Creek Viaduct Centennial Celebration. In 2016 Patty graciously accepted the nomination to assist with financial affairs and auditing of the BHS until her election as Secretary in late 2020. Patty moved to Kingsley in 1979 and has been a permanent resident of the area ever since. She has a terrific knowledge of the Society's inner administrative workings and we are grateful to have her as Secretary.

Jacquelyn Zick Holgate also hails from just outside of Brooklyn proper, down the hill from me. She also attended Brooklyn Elementary and Mountain View High School. Jacquelyn has maintained her ties to the area through her life-long connections with family and

friends. She has extensive experience in retail and now works in pharmacy. She brings her business skills and detail-oriented mind to the Treasurer position at the Society where we are delighted to benefit from her skills and knowledge. Jacquelyn has two children. One lives in Pittsburgh and the other in North Carolina. Each have a young grandchild that Jacquelyn is more than happy to spoil! Both Patty and Jacquelyn are excellent amateur photographers so you may see their handiwork on the BHS Facebook Page. Please join me in welcoming them to the Society!



Before I close out this introductory portion of the Newsletter, I want to take a moment to ask members to consider asking their friends and family if they too would like to become members of the Brooklyn Historical Society. The BHS is only as strong as the number of people we have supporting it. At \$5 a year- it's a good investment in the community and an opportunity to appreciate our common heritage and bond. Thank you.

- John Darcy, President

# Pandemics and History

By John Darcy, PhD

Last Fall Dr. Curtis Stone, one of the founders of the Brooklyn Historical Society brought back to my attention a paper that I had written while in graduate school on pandemic influenza that he had saved as part of the BHS collection of local writings. Dr. Stone was quick to pick up on many of the similarities between the current COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemics of the past. I enjoyed a lengthy conversation with Dr. Stone at his home in Brooklyn about the history of pandemics and how today's pandemic is truly an historic event.

A pandemic is simply an outbreak of infectious disease that occurs across a large geographic region, continent or around the world. There have been many pandemics throughout human history. Widespread infectious disease did not become troublesome for humans until people began to master agriculture, which allowed populations to grow, resulting in people living in larger and larger communities. Agriculture also brought humans into close contact with livestock where almost all severe infectious diseases originate. In our hunter-gatherer past, people did not live close enough to each other, with agricultural animals or in sufficient numbers for infectious diseases to get a foothold and spread quickly. Once people began living together in villages, towns and cities, things changed.

While various religious and historical texts refer to pandemics and plagues in ancient times, the first well documented pandemics occurred in the mid to late Middle Ages (1000-1600 A.D.). At the time various infectious diseases impacted humans such as black plague, leprosy, tuberculosis and influenza. The last one, influenza, was special because it could be spread from person to person through the air (much like COVID-19) whereas the black plague that killed off one third of Europe in the mid-1300's was spread

through the bite of an infected flea.

The first recorded influenza outbreak occurred in 1173 in Europe. It was later followed by additional outbreaks in Europe in 1510 and 1557. The origins of these outbreaks were traced to Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) and parts of North Africa making these



Map of Asia. Identical to the maps of Guillaume D'Isle (ca.1723)

outbreaks truly pandemic events because of the large geography they covered. Further influenza outbreaks in Europe occurred in 1729, 1781, 1830 and 1898. The disease was brought to Europe via trade routes from central Asia and parts of China. The higher frequency of occurrence of these outbreaks set the stage for the largest influenza pandemic in history during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



Walter Reed Hospital flu ward (ca. 1910-1920)



The 1918 Pandemic Influenza, also known as Spanish Flu, is considered the largest most severe pandemic to ever face humanity. In the United States, a soldier at Fort Riley in Kansas had the first documented case of the disease and may have contracted it from pigs he was tending. It did not originate in Spain as the term Spanish Flu suggests but rather took on this name when the King of Spain came down with it. The disease quickly spread through Fort Riley and beyond carried by soldiers traveling by train, ship and horse across the globe during World War I. An estimated 50 to 100 million people perished during the three-year pandemic globally and in the U.S. 675,000 people died. Betty Smith from the Susquehanna County Historical Society publishes in the Montrose Independent a column entitled "100 Years Ago" where over the past few years one could see reference to the local folks in Susquehanna County who succumbed to or were impacted by the great Influenza of 1918.

Today we are all confronted with a modern-day pandemic, COVID-19. The name of the disease is officially called "coronavirus disease 2019" or "COVID-19" for short. The virus that causes the disease is officially named "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" or "SARS-CoV-2" for short. It is a virus that belongs to the same family of viruses as the common cold and gets its name (from the Latin *coronam* for crown) from a crown-like appearance of the molecules on the outside of the virus. The virus spreads easily from person to person through the air and can be spread again before a person even knows that they are infected. Health experts have worried about such a virus for decades because never before in human history have people been moving about in cars, trains and air-

planes or living in such large cities as they do today. Essentially, the disease spreads through human contact and at no point in history have so many people been physically connected to one another through travel and daily living. It's a virus' dream!

Historically however, some things are different. We know now that reducing exposure to other people through either mask wear-



Emergency hospital during influenza epidemic, Camp Funston, Kansas (1918).

ing or keeping away from others is effective at getting in the virus' way. We also are lucky to live in a country with advanced acute care capabilities in our hospitals that care for the sick. We have advanced drugs and medical techniques to help treat the ill. We isolate and take care of the sick quickly in our society so that at times it seems there is not even a pandemic happening- just people wearing masks at the grocery store. We do not see the intensive care units full of people or hospital beds filled with the sick and dying. It's all out of sight, out of mind. But at the time of this newsletter nearly 600,000 Americans have died of COVID-19 and 32 million have been infected. Health officials admit that that death toll may actually be closer to 900,000.



The other historically unprecedented element of this pandemic is the rapid development of safe and effective vaccines in under a year. Vaccines are not new but advances in technology and our understanding of the genetics of DNA and RNA have revolutionized their production. In the past it would have required more than a decade to develop and produce a safe vaccine, if not longer. The cemeteries around Brooklyn are full of young people from the 1800's who died of diseases like diphtheria, typhoid and others that we don't worry about anymore because of vaccines. The vaccines produced today are helping the U.S. return to normal life. While there are still people getting sick and unfortunately dying almost all of whom are unvaccinated, there is hope. The number of new cases and hospitalizations are both in decline. Places like India that have 4 times the population of the U.S. are not faring as well because of poor vaccine access. While vaccines are not perfect, they are a game changer and the only thing that has the potential to keep us from repeating the dark history of pandemics of the past.



Test Tubes from experimenting on coronavirus. Original image sourced from US Government department: Public Health Image Library, US CDC.

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## Bridge Overlook Update

The Kingsley Viaduct Overlook Project has been ongoing since 2017. A number of individuals and businesses have contributed to the project. As the project nears completion, the BHS plans on holding a ribbon cutting ceremony this coming autumn to which all members will be welcome. Please check our BHS Facebook page for date and time later this summer. The BHS wishes to thank the following enterprises and individuals for their efforts and contributions to the project.

- The Susquehanna County Room Tax Fund and Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau
- Peoples Security Charitable Foundation
- Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc.
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
- Brooklyn Township Supervisors
- Masters Concrete Products
- Molenko Sign Company LLC
- Christopher F. Simone
- Nicholson Lumber Company
- John Arnone
- Craig Robertson
- Joe Thomas



View from the Bridge Overlook on Zick Hill Rd, Fall 2020; J. Holgate

# Barns Abound

By David J. Palmer

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In last year's Annual Newsletter, I mentioned that Ann and John Corbin were dismantling and repurposing an ancient barn on their property in Brooklyn Township.



Recently Ann Corbin telephoned me to advise that they were starting a project to rebuild another ancient barn. This one is on the Korban farm in Lathrop Township that she and John inherited a few years ago. She knew I would be excited, as my maternal Grandmother, Anna Mabel (Robinson) Pratt was born on this farm in 1909. I remember my Grandmother telling me that she and her



little sister, Cora Leola (Robinson) Corbin were upset with their parents when informed on short notice, that the farm had been sold, and the family was moving to a new farm in Hop Bottom, on the road to Brooklyn (present day SR 167).

Indeed, I was excited to hear the news of this restoration and made a point to visit the work site recently. Speaking to the two young men contracted to do the reconstruction, I was excited to hear that the repurposed

wood from the Brooklyn barn was stored there on the old Korban farm and would be used to rebuild this barn.

I could not help but think of the title of the popular 1980s movie "Back to the Future." Here some ancient timbers were being used to rebuild a barn as ancient as the Robinson surname in Brooklyn Township, and surrounding Lathrop Township and Hop Bottom Borough. Until about 1824, all three municipalities were known as Hop Bottom Township.

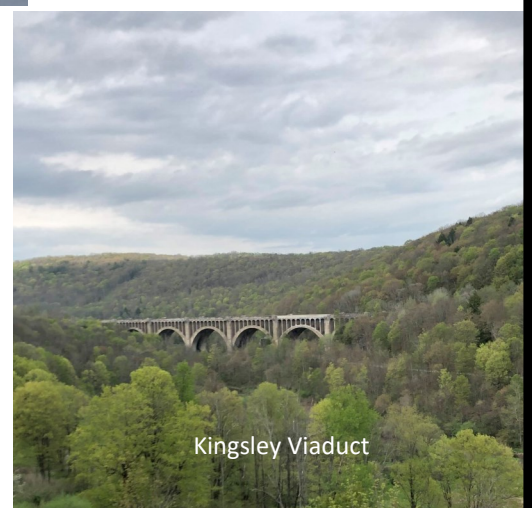
A map from 1858 at the Susquehanna County Historical Society notes the present-day Korban farm in Lathrop Township as being owned by Thomas Jefferson Robinson, my Great-Great-Great Grandfather. My boyhood home is just below it on the old John Baka place. Taking in the spectacular view from the Korban farm, I can appreciate the attraction to build a home here, and my Grandma Pratt's and Aunt Cora's love for this place. I suspect they helped milk cows in the barn being restored. I am already excited about next year's annual newsletter, when I will provide pictures of the new old barn. "Back to the Future."





# Annual Meeting Details

<b>WHO:</b>	All current and new members
<b>WHAT:</b>	Brooklyn Historical Society Annual Meeting
<b>WHERE:</b>	Brooklyn Universalist Church, Maple Street Brooklyn, PA 18813
<b>WHEN:</b>	Sunday, July 18, 2021 at 2PM
<b>DETAILS:</b>	The BHS will conduct it's annual business meeting, followed by a talk on the Dennis Farm. Refreshments will be served.
<b>TALK:</b>	Darryl Gore, Vice President of Development at the Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust will give a presentation on the Dennis Farm



*The BHS has commemorative box cars from the Kingsley Viaduct Centennial Celebration still available! Great Holiday or Commemorative Gift! Some assembly required. \$20.00 each. Use order form below.*



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

Please add \$3.00 mailing fee for each publication or item ordered.

DUES FORM: {Return/Payable to **Brooklyn Historical Society, PO Box 154, Kingsley, PA 18826**}

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_ (email: \_\_\_\_\_)

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \$5 annual dues *per person* ( ) \$100 lifetime *per person*  
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ORDER FORM FOR PUBLICATIONS: (\$ \_\_\_\_\_) Enclosed

Publication/Item(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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