



The Governor's Gossip

August 2023
v. 41, no. 3

**Newsletter of the Governor Wolf Historical Society,
Owner of the Wolf Academy Historic Site, East Allen Township**

Upcoming Events

By Linda Kortz

Guten Tag! Our Octoberfest Tea will be held Sunday, October 1, from 2 to 4 p.m. We are celebrating the fun and toe-tapping German way of throwing a fall party. Of course, ours is a tea, so leave your beer steins at home and bring your favorite tea cup! If you do not have a real teacup, we have a beautiful collection of real teacups for sale. You could even purchase one for a friend.

Get in the Mood

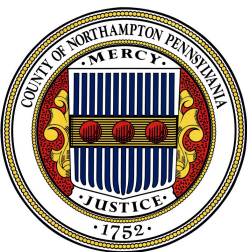
Have a German outfit? Wear it! Or wear autumn colors and try to stay in your seat as fabulous, lively German polkas fill the Wolf Academy! Popular musician Harry Laurito, who has been playing for decades, will get us into a "want- to-get up-and-dance" mood. Laurito has played with many famous polka, Polish, and German bands, both live and on recordings. This will be fun!

Food and Prizes

Our tea table will be overflowing with German cakes, cookies, candies, tiny sandwiches, and more! As always, the Academy will be decorated to fit this occasion. You could win a great prize - free tickets to our annual Wreath Class in November, annual House Tour on December 2, Candlelight Christmas Concert on December 10th, and many more!

Register Now!

Our past teas have all sold out, and we already have paid reservations for this one! Tickets are \$28. Reservations are made upon receipt of your check. Please call with your name and number of seats requested. If you are coming as a group, please have one person call with all names. Please pay the group total with one check. Call Linda Kortz at 610-905-0007 as soon as you can.



This program is being funded in whole or in part with funding from the Hotel Tax Grant Program through the County of Northampton Department of Community & Economic Development.

"The Octoberfest Afternoon Tea"

A German Festival in a teacup!

Hand clapping German music!
Please bring your favorite teacup!
Teacups will be available for sale.

OCTOBER 1ST, 2:00-4:00PM

\$28. Each – Reservations – 610-837-9015

The Governor Wolf Historical Society
6600 Jacksonville Road, Bath, PA
gowolf.org

Annual Picnic — August 19

Our annual picnic will be held August 19 from noon to 4 p.m. GWHS will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, all of the fixings, and non-alcoholic beverages. Attendees should bring a pot luck dish to share, lawn chairs and games, and may bring adult beverages if desired.

Open House Dates

August 19, September 16, October 21
1 to 3 p.m.

Free guided tours of the Society's
3 historic buildings and museum

No reservations needed

Governor Wolf Historical Society

6600 Jacksonville Road
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This newsletter is published four times a year (February, May, August and November) as a service to its members and the public by the Governor Wolf Historical Society. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the editor before the 1st of the publication month. However the Society reserves the right to select and edit all content.

**Member Death:
Peter Rohrbach**

Peter H. Rohrbach, 72, of Moore Township, died on June 11. A local history enthusiast, Peter was a long time member of the Society. For more than 40 years, he owned and enjoyed living in the Old Chubbsville House in Point Phillips. Peter was pleased to showcase his home and share it with others on our Christmas House Tour.

To reflect his passion for GWHS, Peter's family requested donations be made to the Society. Donations have been received from:

Carol Bear
Lee Ann Jacobi
Larry Weaver
Kathy Wilhelm

Monthly Meetings

The Society holds monthly meetings at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Monocacy School, located at our historic site, 6600 Jacksonville Road, Bath, PA 18014. All members and interested individuals are invited to attend.

Membership

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is an all volunteer organization dedicated to preserving local history. If you are not a member, we invite you to become a member and support our activities. A membership form is found on page 5 of this newsletter.

We Need Your Email Address!

Our full color electronic newsletter is available in your inbox before the printed black and white version is mailed. Updates about our events and activities are emailed between newsletters. To be added to our email distribution list, please send your email address to Treasurer Kathy Wilhelm at gwhs1958@gmail.com. If you supplied the Society with your email, and you are not getting emails about upcoming activities and events, contact Kathy at the same email.

Free Historic Site Tours

The Society offers free tours of our three historic buildings, grounds, and new museum on the third Saturday of each month, April through November, from 1-3 p.m. No reservations are needed.

Knowledgeable guides will discuss the history of each building, Gov. George Wolf, and provide details about items in the museum.

The Society is always willing to provide tours to individuals, families, school classes, youth groups, and social organizations at other times. To schedule a tour, call 610-837-9015 or email gwhs1958@gmail.com

Historic Site Rentals

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is fully open and ready to rent out our buildings and 3 1/2 acre grounds to host your next birthday party, baby shower, meeting, or even a small wedding. We currently rent out the historic Wolf Academy and Monocacy School and the beautiful surrounding gardens. There is plenty of parking in the adjacent grassy meadow. For more information about rental opportunities, please contact Abby Spencer at spencerabby@yahoo.com or 610-428-3975.

Mom's Scottish Shortbread

A recipe from Lucienne Hosford, one of our hearth cooking ladies

- 2 cups flour
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup soft butter
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 heaping tablespoon minced rosemary (optional)
- powdered sugar (optional)

Put the three dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the butter, egg yolk, vanilla, and, if desired, rosemary. Mix with your fingers until the dough holds together. Press into a 9 x 13 Pyrex container. Score with a fork. Bake at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes until golden. Cut into squares while hot. Dust with powdered sugar if desired.

From Our President



I can't believe it's August already! In August we'll be visiting Jim Thorpe and having our Members Picnic – everyone is welcome! Next up is the Octoberfest Tea which you won't want to miss. Then the holidays kick in with wreath making, Holiday History Festival, 41st annual Christmas House Tour and the Candlelight Concert. Each one is so special and so much fun! Thanks for being a member – see you soon!

Your GWHS President,

Carol

Musings from the Museum

by Linda Kortz

Map Repairs

Steve Hilberg loaned us a matching copy of the large 1860 Northampton County wall map that the Society owns. Bob Bysher of na studies professionally photographed sections that will be used to repair the corners of our damaged map. Friendship Framing on Airport Road will be correctly repairing and preparing our map.

Group Tours

Want to schedule an interesting tour for your scout group, family, church, history buff friends, or teacher buddies? Call and leave a message. We can schedule one tailored to your group. We do ask for donation as we are not funded except for grants and gifts.

If you are an educator - public, private, or home school - we can run a fun and educational visitation for your students. They can try many old time arts, tasks, games and even write their initials in cursive writing! We also conduct a "Magical History Tour" in May of each year for students. Call now to get information for your class's trip in the coming school year. We can schedule large groups.

Donations Welcome

We are adding to our exhibits in the museum! If you have any old

school photos, early school items, or items from 1800s life, such as tools, household, needlework, or pottery, please call Linda Kortz at 610-905-0007.



Photo by Barb Wiemann

Linda Kortz conducts a museum tour for a visiting group.

Check Our Web Site and Facebook

Get the Latest News and Information!

Looking for updated information about Society events and activities? Curious about our buildings? Check our redesigned web site!

The web site features many photos and new information. Sections of the site include background articles about the Society and a biography and video about the life of George Wolf. There are also photos and a description of each of the Society's buildings. For anyone interested in renting the Academy or School, virtual tours enable users to see the features of

each location. Other tabs lead visitors to our calendar of events, news, and rental and contact information. The site also has provision for accepting memberships using Paypal or a credit card.

The latest GWHS information is also available on Facebook.



Save the Dates

November and December Events!

November 24 and 25 — Wreath Making Workshops

December 2 — Christmas House Tour

December 2 and 3 — Holiday History Fest

December 10 — Holiday Concert featuring Seasons

Complete details will be available in the November newsletter and on the Society's website.

Advance registration required for the Wreath Workshops.

Successful Events During Last Quarter

Magical History Day



Jackie Sellers explains the game of pick-up sticks to students from the Northampton Area School District during their May visit to the Society. The Society offers a Magical History Day every year to introduce students to our local history and life 150 years ago. Teachers can contact the Society for details. Photo by Linda Kortz.

Passport to History

A family enjoys making pine cone bird feeders. In the background, another group explores the art of tin punching. Crafts and games were a popular attraction for families at Passport to History. Photo by Linda Kortz.



By Linda Kortz

We had about 35 visitors, both local and from more distant areas, visit our site for Passport to History Day on July 15th. Barb Wiemann and Annette Lare were in our museum and presented the story of Governor George Wolf and his many accomplishments that improved life for all citizens. Education was his secret weapon to insure success for all and making Pennsylvania commerce flourish.

Pat Grillo, Melina Nye, and Jackie Sellers had a good time that day, teaching visitors about lavender herbal bundles, pierced tin candle sconces, wooden "quilt" trivets, and fun old time games. Annette Vleit presented an impressive display of antique toys and explained them to visitors. Our hearth cooking demonstration by Kathy Wilhelm and Lucienne Hosford was, as always, a real crowd pleaser! The amazing aromas drifted through the Ralston-McKeen House, pulling everyone into the restored hearth room. They sold out of their cookbooks!

Summer Institute of Colonial Crafts



Instructor Jane Moyer guides Phyllis Facchiano as she weaves her basket. Photo by Carol Bear.

The Summer Institute of Colonial Crafts was held June 8-10 on the Governor Wolf campus. This year we had 6 classes with 30 students, with some students taking multiple classes. It was delightful to see the enthusiasm from both students and instructors! For the first time we offered beginner blacksmithing and it was a big hit. Other classes were several embroidery offerings, basket weaving, and beneficial insects in your garden. Keep your eyes open for more colonial craft classes in June of 2024.

Dodge Brothers Car Club

On August 4th, members of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Dodge Brothers Car Club visited our site for a tour. The Club was in Pennsylvania for the Das Awkscht Fest weekend in Macungie and drove here in their antique vehicles. Members came from Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, as well as Pennsylvania

This was a two way event – they toured our historic site and we enjoyed a fun automotive “show and tell” while examining the motorcars.



Scott Schmidt and his son Alexander, from Maryland, stand beside their 1925 Dodge in front of the Wolf Academy. Scott's grandfather purchased the vehicle as a wedding gift for his bride in 1925, and the car has been handed down and driven by four generations of the family. Photo by Barb Wiemann.

Samuel Seem, Local Entrepreneur

While examining Mathew Henry's 1851 Northampton County map, the intersection of present day Nor-Bath Blvd. and Airport Rd. caught my eye. It housed Odenwelder's Tavern and Seems Store. The 1850 census for East Allen Township lists Sam. Seem, storekeeper, residing next to Philip Odenwelder, who ran a hotel. Who was Samuel Seem? After some research, it turns out that Samuel is another example of a local farm boy who prospered after foregoing a farm life.



Early Seem Family

The earliest Seem settler in this area was John George (born 1742 according to his tombstone), a farmer who acquired 120 acres of land near Kreidersville. When he died in 1826, his estate was valued at an astounding \$29,000. Son George inherited his land in Moore Township and his other eight children (sons Conrad and Jacob and 6 daughters who were married into some of the leading area families) each received 700 pounds. George and many of these children are buried at Zion UCC Cemetery, Kreidersville.

Son Conrad (1786-1877), a farmer of Allen Township, fathered 12 children, including Samuel, who he named executor of his will. Conrad's estate was valued at \$18,508, a sizable sum. Conrad died at the Seem Slate Quarry in Plainfield Township and is buried at Zion.

Samuel's East Allen Store

Samuel, born Feb. 27, 1821, in Allen Township, did not follow in his father and grandfather's footsteps to become a farmer. After his marriage to Mary Berger in 1842, and starting a family, Samuel operated a store in East Allen, as indicated in the census and on the map. However, tragedy struck in August 1852 when wife Mary died. With two small children to care for, it appears Samuel moved back home, because in 1853 he was appointed postmaster of the Kreidersville Post Office. The 1855 Map of Easton & 12 Miles Around shows the Odenwelder hotel at the intersection, but no store at the site.

Second Marriage and Bath Store

In 1858 Samuel married Feyetta Kleckner and moved to Moore Township, as indicated on a deed when he and Feyetta sold land in Allen Township to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. By the time of the 1860 census, the family was living in Bath at the southwest corner of Chestnut and Mill Streets (now Northampton St.), where Samuel, a merchant, owned real estate worth over \$8400 and personal property of almost \$8000. Residing in the household were three daughters. A second tragedy occurred when Samuel's second wife died in March, 1865.

Slate Industry Career

A year later, Samuel married Mary Ruhe. In 1869 he was appointed postmaster of Chapman Quarries. Samuel, Mary, and his four youngest children were living in Bath in 1870, but he now listed his occupation as a slate manufacturer. His real estate holdings were worth more than \$41,000 and his personal property \$33,700. The transition from primarily storekeeper to the lucrative slate industry had certainly improved Samuel's financial position. Among his properties was Seem's Slate Quarry in Plainfield Township.



Location of Seem's Bath store from Beers' Atlas of Northampton County, 1874.

As befitting an entrepreneur of his status, Samuel and his family moved to Easton, the economic and social hub of the county. In the 1880 census he lists himself as a slate merchant. The 1884 city directory describes him as a slate dealer. Samuel died in 1892 and is buried in Bath. His widow continued to live at their home in Easton until her death in 1917; she is also buried in Bath.

Membership in the Governor Wolf Historical Society is by the calendar year!

We are an all volunteer Society and need your support.

Now is the time to join!

GOVERNOR WOLF HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

You can help preserve our community's rich cultural heritage by becoming a member of the Governor Wolf Historical Society! Please return this application with a check payable to Governor Wolf Historical Society. If family, please include all names. Mail to: Governor Wolf Historical Society, P.O. Box 134, Bath PA 18014.

- Individual \$25.00; Family \$40.00; Student \$10.00
- Restoration \$75.00; Monocacy \$100.00
- Governor's Guild \$200.00
- Individual Lifetime \$500.00
- Senior Lifetime (62+years) \$250.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____



The Governor's Gossip

GOVERNOR WOLF HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 134
BATH, PA 18014

Return Service Requested

See page 1 for upcoming events

East Allen Place Names

Unincorporated villages dot the countryside in Northampton County townships. They reflect early settlements and honor the family names of those pioneers, such as Weaver, Kleckner, Beers, Peters, and Daniels.

Seemsville

One of those villages is Seemsville, which straddles the Allen-East Allen Township line. Obviously, it was named after the Seem family (see page 5). But why this name was chosen is a small mystery.

The Seem land was located north of Mud Lane, east of Hower-town Road, and extending north of Old Carriage Road in present day Allen Township. In 1874, Seem descendants resided on Snowhill and Twin Brook Roads, north of Old Carriage Rd. in Allen Township. But none were listed as residing in the 14 buildings that comprised the village.

In 1874, the village did have a blacksmith shop, a carpentry shop, and the Seemsville Hotel, operated by Henry Koch. A post office, opened in 1889 with A. C. Osenbach as postmaster, closed in 1906.

Nelighville

A Forgotten East Allen Village

Nelighville was a village located along the Catasauqua Creek, and centered around the Presbyterian Church (now God's Missionary Church on Nor-Bath Blvd.). About the year 1800, Nicholas Neligh, a surveyor, built a mill and operated a store at this site. The small cluster of homes took on his name. However, the village was also known as Centerville because it was half way between Jacksonville (the intersection of Airport Rd. and Nor-Bath Blvd.) and Howertown. In 1845 when Allen Township was divided into East Allen and West Allen, the village had five dwellings and gristmill. The name does not appear on the 1860 or 1874 county maps.

Sauerkraut Hill

One of the unusual, but descriptive, place names found in the township is attached to the hill on Seemsville Rd. about a third of a mile north of Nor-Bath Blvd. The south facing hill must have been ideal for Pennsylvania German farmers to grow cabbage, which they turned into sauerkraut. Although the elevation is only 550 feet, the view of the Lehigh Valley from the crest is panoramic.

Do You Recognize These Students?



This photo is labeled Mrs. Carrie B. Jones, 5th Grade, Knauss School, Sept. 1959-June 1960. Most of these children would have been born in 1949. If you can identify anyone, contact Barb Wiemann at blwiemann@gmail.com or 610-262-6977.