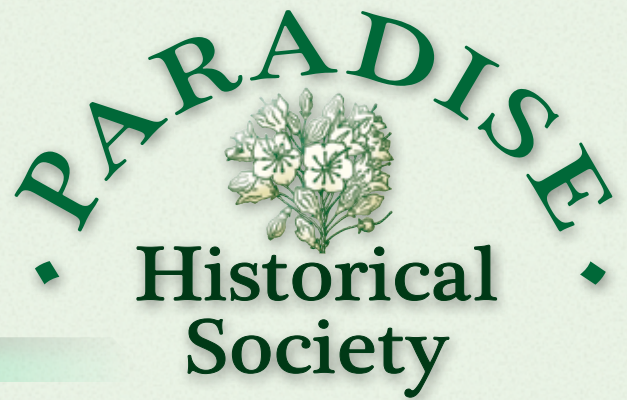


Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE



WINTER 2014 • Volume 8, Issue 6

President's Letter

A neighbor asked me recently why she was getting Paradise Historical Society's newsletter. She said she enjoyed it, but hadn't gotten around to joining the Historical Society, so felt she was getting it in error.

It's true that some historical societies send their newsletter to members only. But our mission is not just to research, preserve and protect the historical richness of Paradise Township — but also to share it.

You also don't have to be a member to take part in our field trips to interesting local sites or to attend meetings where people share knowledge about the history of the Township — families, individuals, businesses, events, transportation, resorts and inns, maps, and so much more. We'd love to have you join us! Get information about meetings at www.paradisehistorical.org or call 570 629-2727.

And I hope you enjoy the newsletter!

Jane

Jane Niering, *President*

A Visit To... Pocono Mountain Bible Fellowship Church

Like Parkside Chapel and Keokee Chapel, Pocono Mountain Bible Fellowship Church got its start as a place of summer worship for visitors — in this case, visitors to nearby Montanesca and Pocono Mountain House.

Elder Ron Miller and his wife Julie were our hosts for the tour. Much of the information he shared came from an article in a church newsletter by Joyce Ball. A summary of Elder Miller's remarks follows.

In the late 1800s Elizabeth Hooman Hawes had a desire to build a church for persons "who may desire to worship God within." Mrs. Hawes died before her dream could be realized. Her last Will and Testament,

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Winter

COLLECTING, PRESERVING & DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

A Visit To... Pocono Mountain Bible Fellowship Church

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however, was to keep that dream alive. Mr. Elwood Bonsall was appointed executor of Mrs. Hawes's estate and set to work to make her dream a reality.

Mr. Bonsall picked a parcel of land close to the place Mrs. Hawes and her parents vacationed in the Pocono Mountains: The Montanesca Hotel.

The Montanesca was a popular place in the Poconos for the well-to-do of Philadelphia to vacation in the late 1800s. Access was made easy by horse drawn-carriages along the old route of Route 611. (Elder Miller noted that this route was originally much closer to the church site. Route 611 was moved at least two more times — first to what is now Trinity Hill Road and then to its present location — leaving the church off the beaten path). Mrs. Hawes's trust stated that the church was to be built in memory of her parents and that services should be held at least 13 weeks a year by a Protestant congregation. In 1904 the church was built, at a cost of about eleven thousand dollars.

Church and community records show that the church was in operation from 1904 to 1940, under the direction of Rev. Edward Yates. From 1940 until 1978, church records are vague. We do know that during this time the building came to be known as "Kirk in the Woods," "kirk" being the Scottish word for "church."

In 1978, a church group publicly voiced its desire that the church be used again, but little seems to have been done to get it into use. Mr. Bonsall had passed away, but the church was still owned by the Elizabeth Hawes Estate with the Provident National Bank of Philadelphia as the trustee. Nevertheless, by 1978 the church was abandoned, unused, and subject to vandalism and the elements.

Six years later, in 1984, the Berean Bible Fellowship Church of Stroudsburg planned to plant a new church in Mt. Pocono. Pastor A. L. Seifert volunteered to be the Organizing Pastor of this new congregation. After prayer and a search for a place to meet, the first service was held at the Pocono Mountain Daycare on December 9, 1984.

By April of 1985, the congregation had outgrown that facility, and the congregation learned of the abandoned church building called "Kirk in the Woods." The building needed work, to say the least — the roof leaked, windows were broken, there was extensive water damage to the interior, and the building had never been converted from gas lamps to electric lighting.

The congregation worked to raise money and make the needed repairs. On June 30, 1985, the first Bible Fellowship service was held in the Hooman Memorial Church. By August of that year attendance reached 100. In April of 1987 the congregation was officially chartered as a functioning Bible Fellowship Church. In August 1991 the Provident National Bank transferred the title to the church property to this new congregation.

We visited the large, beautifully renovated sanctuary, which has the original pews and stained glass windows. The chandeliers are the original gas light fixtures, converted to electricity. A fellowship hall, offices, kitchen, and classrooms have been added. The exterior of the church is much as it was when originally built; the craftsmanship of its stonework is remarkable.

The Bible Fellowship Church continues to meet in this building today. Services are held Sundays: 9:30 - 10:30 Sunday School for all ages, followed by worship from 10:45 - 12. A prayer meeting is held Wednesdays at 7:00. All welcome.



A view of the porch at the Montanesca Hotel.



The church as it was in the mid-1980's, prior to renovations and additions.



The church as it appears today.

EVERYONE ENJOYS

SHOW AND TELL

September saw a return of show and tell to PHS. Members brought various items to show and discuss. Many pictures of folks both known and unknown were reviewed. Photos of folks believed to be Prices were shown and successfully identified. Postcards from the collections of Ellen Davis and LeeAnne Dyson were provided for the enlightenment of those present.

Suzanne McCool shared a number of pictures including one of the Paradise Inn dining room where her mother worked as a cook for a number of years.

Dan Hamblin brought along three original deeds and discussed the process of tracing deeds in Monroe County. The early 1800s deeds he exhibited were fascinating and illustrated how in the past geographic land marks included trees and rocks in streams. These landmarks were used to define the boundaries of the properties that were identified in the deeds.

Suzanne McCool and Jane Niering.



Ellen Davis sharing her postcard collection.



Photos: Kim Williams



Dan Hamblin and a deed.

Thanks to the Roadmaster!

Bob Safin donated to the Historical Society an extensive collection of photos of the 1955 flood that had such dramatic consequences in Paradise Valley. The photographs show the devastation caused by the 1955 flood. Included in the photographs are scenes at the Cresco station where trains were terminated and passengers transported by bus around the trackage that was damaged in the Devil's Hole. The buses have military markings which makes it appear they were from the Tobyhanna Army Depot. The photos will be added to the Society's archives. Thank you, Bob!

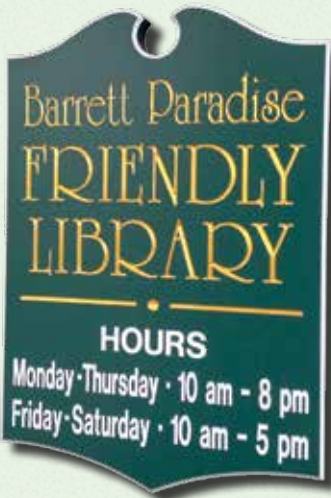
Do you have photos, stories, newspaper clippings, or other artifacts about the flood in Paradise? A program about the flood and how it affected people in the Valley is in the works — please share what you know! Call 570 629-2727 or email jimhill@ptd.net.



Paradise Historical Society
P.O. Box 94
Henryville, PA 18332

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THE PHS Preserving Archives History



PHS currently maintains a collection of materials in archives stored at the Barrett Paradise Friendly Library. The purpose of the archives is to preserve the history of the township as well as serve as a resource for disseminating information about our past. There are many interesting items in the archives and we encourage additions to the collection. Oversized items as well as other bulk collections are stored in the library basement in filing cabinets.

Programs in the Works for 2015

We are planning on some great programs for the upcoming year. Come hear about the golf course built by the DL&W railroad which was located in "downtown Paradise Valley." Post card collections of our area will be displayed and discussed by their owners. Also in the works is an Edna Palmer Englehardt Day with a display of some of her work.



Meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month at 2:00 at the Paradise Township Municipal Building, unless otherwise advertised. All are welcome, and refreshments are served.

What else would you like to hear about? We would love to hear from you.

The directors and officers of Paradise Historical Society are
Ed Burns, Eleanor Burns, LeeAnne Dyson,
Dan Hamblin, Carol Hillestad, Aaron Imbt, John Layton,
Laura Layton, Harold Metzgar and Jane Niering —
and we welcome our new members!

Chris and Theresa Merli
Jeff and Dawn Ross
Audrey Thompson

Become a
Member
Today!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS! Please help Paradise Historical Society collect, protect & share the interesting history of our area.

- Student or Senior (65+) - \$8.00 Family - \$25.00 Individual - \$10.00
 Corporate - \$50.00 Couple - \$20.00 Sustaining - \$100.00

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to: Paradise Historical Society, P.O. Box 94, Henryville, PA 18332

