

SPRING 2011

The Gretna Chronicles NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Report by Fred Buch

Inside this issue:

<i>Museum Artifact</i>	3
<i>Buy a piece of history</i>	3
<i>Mt. Hope Furnace</i>	3
<i>Scotch & Water, please</i>	4
<i>Business Sponsors</i>	5
<i>MGAAHS Board</i>	5
<i>Summer Programs</i>	6

The summer season of 2011 will soon be upon us and we are excited about the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society events. Our Library/Research Center in the lower level of the building will be open to the public for the first time this year on Saturday mornings. You will be able to use our collection of Old House Journals to get ideas for your cottage renovations along with names of material suppliers.

Minutes for the Chautauqua & the Campmeeting Association from years ago will be available for you to read. We also hope to have some of our photograph collection scanned for use on the computer. The Military Room on the second floor of the museum will also

be in place for the first time. Three interesting programs have been developed with the Chautauqua Summer Programs in the Friday evening series.

This is the third Newsletter edited by our new newsletter team that includes Marla Pitt, Kerry Royer and Joan Zercher. I am sure that you will agree that they are doing an excellent job. You can assist them and save postage for the Historical Society, if when you renew your membership, you would include your email address and permit us to send your newsletter by email. I can assure you that we will NOT share your email address with anyone. Of



course, if you do not have an email address, we will send your newsletter by U.S. Mail.

We still need volunteers to help with refreshments at our three programs, to serve on other committees and to serve as docents. Please check your interests at the bottom of your membership renewal card or email me at info@buchorgan.com.

The Pennsylvania Chautauqua by Joyce Ebright

The Chautauqua Literary and Science Circle system (CLSC) developed by Dr. John Heyl Vincent for the Mother Chautauqua in New York was the major reason for the expansion of the Chautauqua movement. Participation in these reading circles grew rapidly, and so did the demand to build Independent Chautauquas across the country. People in Lebanon and surrounding counties were no different. They too had an interest in establishing an

Independent Chautauqua.

On August 1, 1891, a committee was formed to create a Chautauqua in Pennsylvania. The immediate tasks were to name the organization; to write a constitution which would layout the organizational and financial structure; to create a list of fifteen people willing to serve on the Board of Managers; and to set a date for the first Stockholder's meeting. By November, the committee began holding meetings across the

state to offer stock for sale in this new organization and to present the newly drafted constitution for ratification.

The first Stockholder's meeting scheduled for January 6, 1892 took place in the Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad's Ross Hall. It was at this meeting that the constitution for "The Pennsylvania Chautauqua" was adopted and the fifteen member Board of Managers was elected. With all the necessary votes taken, the (con't page 2)



Spring is a beautiful time to explore Mt. Gretna.

*Photo by
Madelaine Gray*

The Pennsylvania Chautauqua (con't from front page)



"From the beginning, it was important to board members that the Chautauqua grounds have an air of tranquility and refinement."

organization could now file for a State Charter which was granted by the Court of Common Pleas of Lebanon County on January 13, 1892.

In March, a newly appointed building and grounds committee was charged with finding a perfect site for the Summer Assembly scheduled for July 11 through 28. Robert H. Coleman had offered to lease a site east of the Mt.

Gretna Park. The committee traveled there to investigate, but did not like the suggested site. They did, however, find one to the south and west of the park that they thought was perfect. At first, Robert Coleman would not agree to lease this site. Eventually, he did acquiesce, and the original 47 acres selected by the committee would become the grounds for the Pennsylvania Chautauqua.

From the beginning, it was important to board members that the Chautauqua grounds have an air of tranquility and refinement. This sentiment is reflected in a letter written by George B. Stewart, president to the Rev. Theodore E.

Schmauck on March 8, 1892, in which he states "the ground should be made beautiful ... with an air of permanency and refinement." To achieve this goal, a Landscape Architect was hired to lay out the streets, cottages, walkways, the park area, tennis courts, croquet grounds and areas for flower beds. This all was to be surrounded by a fence which would add an element of security.

Building construction could not begin until the spring of 1892. Even then, not all the building plans were in place. According to the PA Chautauqua Minutes Book, John Cilley's bid for the auditorium was not finalized until May 20, 1892, and final plans for the 30 by 60 foot dining room were not adopted until June 6, 1892.

Amazingly though, by July 11, building crews had completed two small dormitories, "Terrace Hall" for men and "Woodcliff" for women, ten cottages of two rooms, thirteen cottages of four rooms, a hotel cottage, a number of private cottages, a two-story lecture hall, a dining room with kitchen, a bookstore, wash rooms, and various other small buildings. John Cilley's auditorium, accord-

ing to the Lebanon Daily News, was completed July 12.

The Rev. J. Max Hark, chancellor, was equally as busy planning programs for this first Assembly. Courses of instruction, prayer services, recitals, music and art programs all had to be planned. Lecturers, professors, ministers and musicians had to be hired. This required a huge amount of correspondence and, where possible, personal visitations.

Indeed by July 11, everything was in order and the first Assembly began. By all accounts, this Assembly was extremely successful with an estimated 8,798 people in attendance either at a daily program or for the entire Assembly.

Financially, over 300 shares of stock at \$10 per share were sold, and that money was used to cover the costs of the first Assembly. Unfortunately, there was a short-fall of \$300 for which a note was given to Judge J.B. McPherson. In addition, the cost for providing facilities exceeded revenues, and a loan for \$7,500 had to be borrowed at six percent interest to pay for the improvements to the grounds.

Our Mission: The Society is charged with preserving the heritage of the entire Mount Gretna area, including Mount Gretna Borough, the Pennsylvania Chautauqua, Mount Gretna Campmeeting, Mount Gretna Heights, Timber Hills, Conewago Hill, Stoberdale, areas to Colebrook once occupied by the Pennsylvania National Guard, and areas of Cornwall which involved the Coleman family

Campmeeting Cottage Dollhouse



Photo provided by Madelaine Gray

The museum collection includes a Mount Gretna cottage dollhouse representing the 1930 through 1940 period. It was built by Joan C. Nagle of Aiken, SC, as a gift for her husband, Elliott V. Nagle. Elliott grew up spending summers in a similar cottage owned by his parents at 3rd & Mills in the Campmeeting. The interior replicates that cottage. It was presented to the museum a few years ago in memory of Elliott who died in 2000.

Mt. Gretna History can be yours

Visit our website to order your piece of Mt. Gretna history:
www.mtgretnahistory.org.

The Narrow Gauge Railroad booklet by Jack Bitner \$6.95 or two for \$11.00. Please add \$2.00 postage.

The Mount Gretna Maximum Security Prison – A Monumental Failure booklet by P.B. Gibble, Jr. \$5.00 + \$2.00 postage.

Car Decal “MTG” \$3.00 or two for \$5.00. Please add \$1.00 postage.

DVD -- Pennsylvania National Guard - The Mount Gretna Years 1885 to 1935, by James F. Seltzer, Ph.D. \$10.00. This includes approx. 140 photos with music background. Please add \$2.00 postage.

DVD Two-Disc Set -- Mount Gretna & Narrow Gauge Railroad History presentation “unedited” by Jack Bitner. \$25.00 or two for \$45.00. Please add \$4.00 postage.

“Mount Gretna - A Coleman Legacy” by Jack Bitner is now being reprinted. To get your

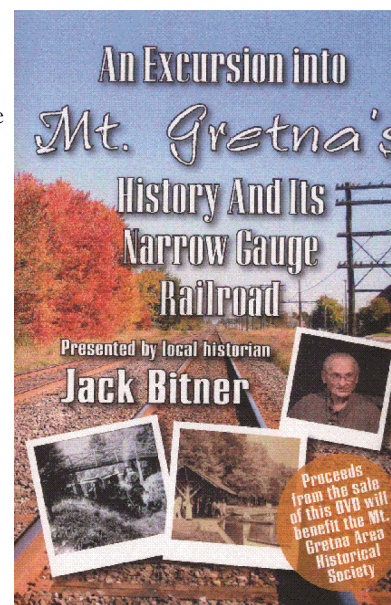
name on the waiting list to be first to receive an order form, send name, address, telephone and email, to:

**MGHHS
Box 362**

Mt. Gretna, PA 17064

or email:

info@buchorgan.com.



Scotch & Water, Please by Tom Meredith

It was a dark and stormy night in February, 1946 as the *SS Byron Darnton*, a not-so-old Liberty ship, neared the end of her voyage over the treacherous Winter North Atlantic. The war was over, but, the desperate need for food, clothing, and supplies of all kinds in Europe kept the Liberty ships sailing. The *Byron Darnton* had survived more than two years of Winter North Atlantic convoys to Murmansk, but now, in peacetime, a winter gale proved too much for her. She lost her bearings in the North Channel leading into the Irish Sea and ran aground on the island of Sanda, a tiny dot of land you can find on a map by looking just off the Scottish coast, ten miles south of Campbeltown. (That's the way they spell it in Scotland, and it even has a connection to our own Lebanon County Campbeltown – but that's another story, as Rudyard Kipling used to say.) Fifty-four people, passengers and crew, were aboard the *Byron Darnton* that night, but all were safely taken off by boats from the Campbeltown lifesaving station.

There is also a remote (very remote, I admit) connection between this shipwreck and Mt. Gretna. If you visited the Historical Society's museum this summer and stopped to enjoy the display of Ann Hark's books, you've got a clue. In the late twenties, 1928 or 1929, Ann was married-briefly – to Byron Darnton.

this connection, which ended in divorce in 1930, certainly did not entitle Byron to have a Liberty ship named for him, but his status as an unusually competent, aggressive, and popular newspaperman, did.

After a stint in Baltimore working with H. L. Mencken, he moved for a short time to the Philadelphia papers (where presumably he met Ann Hark) and then went on to hit the New York journalistic scene, working on the *New York Times* where he created and edited the "Review of the Week" section for the Sunday edition. Preferring action and reporting to editing, Byron got himself posted to New Guinea as a *Times* war correspondent shortly after the war broke out. And in February, 1942 in one of the inevitable and always tragic cases of "friendly fire" a bomb from an American B-25 fell nearby and killed him. The lengthy obituary in the *Times* leaves no doubt about Byron's standing in the high powered world of journalism.

Well over two thousand Liberty ships were built during the war, and ships need names, so it was not unusual that one of them would be given the name of the highly respected war correspondent. The *Byron Darnton* was launched in Baltimore, December 16, 1943, with the journalist's widow crashing the traditional champagne bottle against the hull, aided by her two sons, Robert, age 3, and John, almost a year

old.

How ironic that after surviving two years on the terrible Murmansk run, it should be a Scottish rock that ended the *Byron Darnton's* career. The Darnton name, however, has staying power. In 1989 a Shropshire auctioneer named Dick Gannon bought the island of Sanda, where he planned to open the smallest and remotest pub in the British Isles. This he did in 2003, and using the name he could scarcely read on the rusting hulk that came along with the island, called the pub the "Byron Darnton."

And one July day in 2005, Robert and John Darnton, with their families, joined Mr. Gannon in his pub for a champagne toast to the father and namesake. One would love to have seen the reaction of Mr. Gannon when reservations for this party were requested. If this were fiction, it would be ridiculed; but the truth of the matter is that tales like this lurk in family papers and archives of all kinds – hence the excitement and the fun of research. And the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society Museum has excellent facilities and archives for research. Come on in and join the fun.

**The Mount Gretna Area
Historical Society
Museum has excellent
facilities and archives
for research.
Join the fun.**

Please support our business sponsors

Buch Church Organ Co.

1391 Main St.
Ephrata, Pa. 17522
717-733-6614

Chef On The Go

P.O. Box 194
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-3541

Gretna Theatre

P.O. Box 578
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-3627

Gretna Emporium

1 Carnegie Ave.
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-1820

La Cigale

P.O. Box 216
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-2248

Jigger Shop

Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-9686

Madelaine Gray

Photography
710 5th Street
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-3118

Mt. Gretna Lake and Beach

P.O. Box 100
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-3130

Mt. Gretna Realty

Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-2100

Roland Nissley, Architect

Timber Road
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-2235



***The Society home at 206
Pennsylvania Ave.
Mt. Gretna.***

Seasonal Hours:

Sat. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Sun. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Research Library is open
Saturday starting June
from 9-11:30 a.m., and is
closed house tour Saturday
and art show.**

Taylor Miller Pipe Organs

26 E. 10th Ave.
York, PA. 17404
717-845-6504

Timbers

350 Timber Road
P.O. Box 10
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-3601

Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society Board

Fred N. Buch, Chairman &
President

Deborah Hurst, Trustee &
Secretary

Cindy Myer, Treas. &
Fin./Endowments

Jack Anderson, Trustee & Oral
History

Dr. David Bronstein, Trustee

Dr. Patricia E. Gobble, Trustee

Robert Gokey, Trustee & Military

Shawn Harbaugh, Trustee &
Webmaster

Dr. Jeffrey Hurst, Trustee &
Museum Comm. Chair

Earl Lenington, Architectural
Preservation Chair

Ted Martin, Trustee

Kerry McGuinness Royer,
Trustee & Newsletter

Thomas L. McMahan, Trustee

Peggy O'Neil, Trustee

Pat Pinsler, Trustee & Volunteer
Coordinator

Marla Pitt, Trustee & Newsletter

Joan Zercher, Newsletter

Advisory:

Connie Dwyer, Bulk Mail Supervisor

*Stephen R. Gobble, Esq., Honorary
Trustee*

Roland Nissley, Honorary Trustee

Peter S. Seibert, Honorary Trustee

David Wood, Honorary Trustee



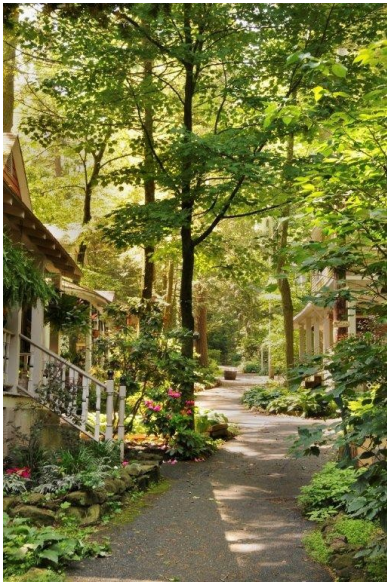
Fiddleheads unfurl in warm
Mt. Gretna weather.

Photo by Madelaine Gray

P.O. Box 362
Mt. Gretna, PA 17064
The Society home is
206 Pennsylvania Ave. in Mt. Gretna
717.964.1105

We're on the web!

www.mtgretnahistory.org



Check the Mt. Gretna Arts
Council summer calendar for
program listings. This year's
cover art is by Madelaine Gray.

Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society Program Highlights

June 3, 7:30 p.m., at the Hall of Philosophy

"Official Opening of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua"

We will be using some of the same elements as opening Chautauqua programs of the late 1800s.

June 27, 7 p.m., at the Mt. Gretna Community Library

"The Campaign of First Troop of the Philadelphia City Cavalry Mobilization at Mount Gretna for the Spanish American War in 1898"

The program is being sponsored by the Library and MGAHS

July 1, 7:30 p.m., at the Hall of Philosophy

"Memories of the Summers of the 40s & 50s" A group of people who were growing up in Mt. Gretna during that era will present their memories of activities at the lake and surrounding communities.

August 5, 7:30 p.m., at the Hall of Philosophy

"Daisy Grubb of Mount Hope" A talk about the Grand Lady of Mount Hope Furnace Mansion, Daisy Grubb, will be presented Dr. Loy C. Ackerman, a retired veterinarian and long time historian.

Sept. 2, 7:30 p.m., at the Hall of Philosophy

"Cottage Restoration & Remodeling — Tree & Landscape Restoration"

In our unique community, restoring the trees and landscaping on Gretna properties, is as important, as restoring the wonderful cottages. Certified arborist, John Brewer, from Arborist Enterprises, will present a program on the health of Gretna's forest, and give suggestions for plantings and restoration, on Gretna properties.