

Spring 2015

The Gretna Chronicles NEWSLETTER

MGAHS Chairperson's Report

By Fred Buch

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In 2005, historian Jack Bitner purchased a 1918 Dodge Light Repair Truck thought to have been used by the U.S. military during the time troops trained in Mount Gretna. Jack solicited Friends for contributions with the intent of eventually contributing the vehicle to the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society. But Jack passed away before his campaign received significant funding. Knowing of Jack's wishes, his family generously donated the vehicle to the historical society.

The MGAHS board had initially voted to restore the truck after the mortgage on the society's cottage was retired. However, concern for the deteriorating condition of the truck, in storage since Jack's death, prompted a board committee to investigate the feasibility of restoring the historic vehicle. Committee members David Bronstein, David Tyndall, Dwayne Heckert, and volunteer, Ned Gible sought appraisals on the present truck value and restoration estimates.

Ultimately, the committee determined that the cost of just getting the truck running, let alone the cost of restoration, was prohibitive.

As part of the investigation, members of the committee consulted with a professional auto restorer. He viewed the truck in 2014, accompanied by a truck specialist with the restoration knowledge of Dodge Brother's vehicles of that era. As a result, the committee recommended to the historical society board that the truck be sold to the Dodge expert from Hummelstown who will completely restore the vehicle. As a part of the sales agreement, the purchaser has agreed to bring the army truck to Mount Gretna from time to time for display by the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society. This is a win-win situation for the Society since we will have the truck for display, without incurring the heavy restoration costs or constant burden of the vehicle maintenance.

Following the Society Board vote, the funds derived from the truck sale will be applied to the museum mortgage, specifically for the archival facility in the lower level of our building. When the MGAHS Museum was refurbished, Madelaine Gray and Rupert Bullard generously donated funds for our archive/library research center in memory of Jack Bitner. With the acquisition of these additional funds, we have decided that the entire lower level will be known as

The Jack Bitner Research Library



Jack Bitner (right) and Friend Inspecting the 1918 Truck

MOUNT GRETNA – THEN and NOW

By Larry Bowman

Mount Gretna's rich history stretches back more than 130 years since its establishment by Robert Coleman as a picnic park. From that beginning, Mount Gretna has grown into a community with a mix of seven diverse neighborhoods, along with many historic buildings, well known sites, and scenic landscapes. Some of these sites, buildings and landscapes remain largely unchanged from their early days. Others look vastly different.

To provide you with an appreciation for what changes have occurred or similarities that still exist from Mount Gretna's early years, we are introducing a new column, entitled "Mount Gretna – Then and Now" in this issue of the Historical Society's newsletter. This column, which will appear in future issue of the newsletter, will highlight three sites or locations in Mount Gretna and provide a photo comparison of what they looked like in our community's early days versus today. Each set of "then and now" photos will be accompanied by a brief narrative on the site or building's history.

We hope you enjoy this new column and encourage you to submit suggestions on Mount Gretna locations you would like to see featured in future "Mount Gretna – Then and Now" columns.

THE PARK STORE BUILDING



Old Postcard of Mt. Gretna Store



Current Photo of Pizza Shop Building

The photo, above left, shows what was known in its early years as The Park Store (known to locals as "The Store"), which sat at the location where cars entered Mount Gretna Park from Rt. 117. Alfred Gremminger built this building in the mid-1920's and owned it until about 1935.

The building at that time housed a grocery store on the first floor and had rooms for rent on the second floor. It also featured gas pumps on its southern side along Rt. 117 and had a kerosene pump on the west side of the building to provide cottage owners with the fuel needed to heat their cottages. The benches located outside The Store came from the by-then defunct Cornwall (Narrow Gauge) Railroad.

From the mid-1930's to the 1950's, the building was owned by the Otto family. During this period, it housed a restaurant and offered a limited array of grocery items. Today, this building is home to Mount Gretna Pizzeria, Gretna Computer Consulting, Inc. and Eastern Enterprises' business office on its second floor.

KAUFFMAN HOTEL



Postcard of Abraham Kauffman's Hotel



Existing Foundation of the Kauffman Hotel

In the first decade of the 1900's, Abraham Kauffman purchased the 20-acre Galebach Farm, located adjacent to and just east of the Campmeeting. On this land, he built a sizeable resort and commercial complex that he named "The Willows," which included a bakery, ice cream parlor, ice house, dance hall, movie theater, and other buildings.

Also included in this resort was the Kauffman Hotel, which was located on the south side of Boulevard Street at the intersection of Kauffman Avenue. The Hotel, which is shown in the postcard above left, had a reputation for good food and good service. As shown in the photo, above right, a portion of the Kauffman Hotel's concrete foundation is still visible just south of the Hide-A-Way restaurant's parking lot. Due to financial difficulties encountered by Kauffman in the mid-1920's, the 20-acre Willows property was sold in 1928 – 1929.

QUOITS BEDS



Early Postcard of Pitching Quoits



Present Day Quoit Court on Rt. 117

A popular activity in the Campmeeting in the early decades of the twentieth century through World War II was quoits. Similar to the game of horseshoes, quoits were "thrown" or "pitched" in quoit bed areas in a number of locations throughout the Campmeeting. Pitching Quoits was a popular activity for participants and spectators.

Two quoit beds were located in the current playground area, and others could be found along 2nd Street between Kephart and Castle Avenues, and in the park-like area on the west end of Bell Avenue. However, the most prominent set of quoit beds were located along Rt. 117 across from the miniature golf course., that many people have probably mistaken in recent years for a trolley stop. This site was home to two sets of quoit beds.

Upcoming MGAHS Events

Been Wondering what Great Uncle Ben's pocket watch or that yard sale furniture item you bought might be worth??

Save The Date!!! MGAHS is having an ANTIQUES APPRAISAL FAIR, May 30th from 9-12 am at the Mount Gretna Fire Company Social Hall. This is a fund raiser for the Historical Society. Bring up to 5 items at \$5. per item. Appraiser Terry Breidenstine of *All County Jewelry, Coins and Antiques*, specializes in coins and costume jewelry but also buys and sells toys, military items, sports memorabilia, artwork, glassware, pottery, furniture, instruments and advertising items.

Contact Susan Hostetter for details at 717-964-1956.

MGAHS PROGRAMS

May 30—Antiques Appraisal - Mt. Gretna Firehall—9-12 am

June 19— *Gretna Music—The 1st 40 Years*. Hall Of Philosophy—7:30pm

Dr. Carl Ellenberger, Presenter

June 22—*A Food Scientist Looks at Ann Harks Cookbook Deconstructed*

7:00pm Dr. Jeff Hurst, Presenter In conjunction with MGAHS.

July 10— *What Happened at Campmeeting Stayed at Campmeeting or NOT*. 7:30 pm. Hall Of Philosophy. Dr. George Leyh, Presenter

July 24— *Abraham Kauffman's Grand Dream*. Hall Of Philosophy. 7:30pm

Ron Hontz, Presenter.

September 4— *The History of the Jigger Shop*. Hall Of Philosophy.

7:30pm. Chuck Allwein and the Historical Society.

HISTORY WALKS Conducted by Ron Hontz

Sat. July 11—*The Camp Meeting*—Meet at the corner of the parking lot behind the Tabernacle at 11:00am.

Sat, July 25—*Abraham Kauffman's Grand Dream*. Meet at the Firehouse parking lot at 11:00am

All donations are greatly appreciated.

Treasures From the Attic

Early Communication Artifacts

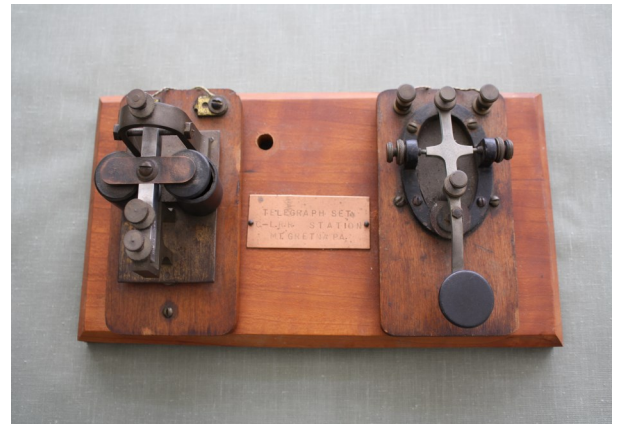
In the 21st Century, we have many ways to communicate with friends and family. Modern media such as E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, FAX, and Smart phones let us reach out to others and keep up social relationships. But a 120 years ago, the available communicative options were much more limited. MGAHS houses some early examples of American communication technology.

In the 1890s, U.S. soldiers undergoing training at Mt. Gretna could contact relatives and friends using what was considered “new” technology at the time. Invented by Samuel Morris during 1830s, by the 1860s telegraph lines linked small villages, towns, and cities across America. Telegraph operators tapped out a series of electronic messages on a telegraph key. Morris Greiner’s father sent messages for servicemen from Mt. Gretna train station operated by Cornwall/Lebanon Railroad using the telegraph key pictured top right.

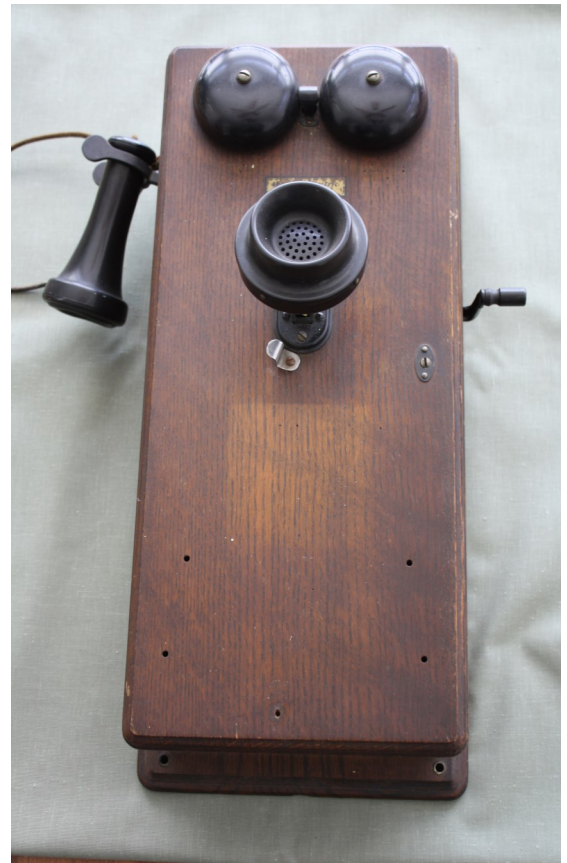
In the first decades of 1900s, communication using the telephone was also in its infancy. In 1870, Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Grey independently invented a device to send sounds over electronic cables. Few homes owned the new invention and many Americans had to rely on the kindness of store owners and wealthier friends when they needed to get in touch with someone. Thanks to the Jackson Family for donating this vintage, 20 lb. wall-mounted, hand-crank example (lower right).

Try shoving this one into your pocket!!

If you have documents, photos, or artifacts you wish to donate or loan to MGAHS, Please contact Pat Pinsler at **964-3858** for an appointment.



*Telegraph Key from the Mt. Gretna
Station of the C&L Railroad
Used until 1926 (Bitner Collection)*



*An Early Telephone Donated by the George
and Esther Jackson Family*

Please Support Our Business Sponsors

Glin Atkinson, Interior Design

Interior Design & Display
Mt. Gretna, PA 17064
717-964-3421

Buch Enterprises LLC

1391 West Main St.
Ephrata, Pa. 17522
717-466-6433

Chef On The Go, Caterers

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

David L. Garver Insurance

809 Holly Lane
Lebanon, Pa. 17042
717-274-5810

Jigger Shop

PO Box 520
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064

Mt. Gretna Realty

PO Box 338
Mt. Gretna, Pa. 17064
717-964-2100

Gretna Graphics

113 Timber Cove
Mt. Gretna, 17064
717-279-1433

Hershey Psychological Services

David A. Rogers, Ph. D.
& Nancy L. Rogers, M.S.
431 E. Chocolate Ave.
Hershey, PA. 17033
717-533-5311

Taylor Miller Pipe Organs

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

Timbers Dinner Theatre

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



The Society's Home at
206 Pennsylvania Ave., Mt. Gretna
Seasonal Hours:

Sat. 1pm to 4pm

Sun. 1pm to 4pm

Research Library is open Sat. starting
May 30

Please call for an Appointment or
schedule special tours with Pat Pinsler
964-3858

Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society Board

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Larry Bowman, Director & Vice Chairman

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Glin Atkinson, Director

Dr. David Bronstein, Director

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To receive your newsletter by
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and click on newsletter or
e-mail info@buchorgan.com.*

Correction: In the Fall 2014 issue, we reported on the establishment of the Timbers Restaurant. We incorrectly listed Mrs. Ernie Otto as the creator of the artistic paintings on the walls of the Hickory Room Bar. The paintings were done by Jean Fahrney, a prolific artist and Fahrney Otto's maternal aunt. She also did similar paintings in the rest rooms, none of which remain today.

Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society

P.O. Box 362

Mt. Gretna, PA 17064

The Society home is

206 Pennsylvania Avenue in Mt. Gretna

717.964.1105

We're on the web!
www.mtgretnahistory.org



Sign of Spring—Aconite

