

# Mount Gretna Chronicles



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by Chris Sholly  
Edited by Morgan  
Smith

## Sarah Tyson Rorer - America's First Dietician



Portrait of Sarah Tyson Rorer

Throughout the decades, multiple famous people, including presidents and movie stars, have visited the Mt. Gretna area. One of these people was Sarah Tyson Rorer, a woman regarded as America's first dietician.

Rorer was born on Oct. 18, 1849, in Richboro, Bucks County, to Charles and Elizabeth Heston Tyson. She was then raised in New York. Sarah was still a baby when her father, who was a pharmacist, moved the family to Buffalo, N.Y. As she grew, Sarah developed an interest in science, following in her father's footsteps. She had hoped to pursue a career much like her father's but realized it was difficult for a woman to follow that role during that time period. The Tyson family later returned to Pennsylvania, settling in Philadelphia, Pa., and in 1871, Sarah married William Albert Rorer who was employed as a bookkeeper. They had three children, two boys and a girl, who died at an early age. She and her husband separated in 1896, but Rorer kept her husband's surname as it was most closely associated with her work. One of her sons, William Albert Rorer, had managed a United States Weather Bureau substation in Mt. Gretna. Her other son, James Birch Rorer was a "micrologist in his majesty's [George V] service for the islands of Trinidad and Tobago," as stated in his 1918 biography.

After returning to Pennsylvania, Rorer decided to take cooking classes at Philadelphia's New Century Club, eventually becoming one of its teachers. She then ventured out on her own, starting the Philadelphia Cooking School that lasted until 1902. She also began writing a book, "Mrs. Rorer's Philadelphia Cook Book," the first of many. In addition, she began writing cooking columns for various publications and became the domestic science editor for a new magazine — Ladies Home Journal.

Sarah's earliest visit to the Mount Gretna community was in 1889, as she was scheduled to speak at the Mount Gretna Agricultural, Mechanical, and Industrial Exposition. She remained active in Pennsylvania Chautauqua gathering in the following year, teaching classes on the art of cooking and other various food topics, including proper diet. Among the many lectures she gave in the 1890s to those attending her classes were about topics such as French batters and "The Picnic Basket." According to newspaper accounts, her classes were always crowded with women, but some men also attended. During the fifth annual meeting of the Chautauqua, Rorer used two cottages on the meeting grounds for her demonstrations. As her fame rose, she spread her theories on cooking and diets at the World's Fairs in Chicago in 1893 (also attended by Milton S. Hershey) and in 1904 in St. Louis, Mo.

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Mount Gretna Area Historical Society  
206 Pennsylvania Ave., Mt. Gretna, PA  
P.O. Box 362, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064  
phone: (717) 964-1105  
mtgretnahistory@gmail.com  
www.mtgretnahistory.org

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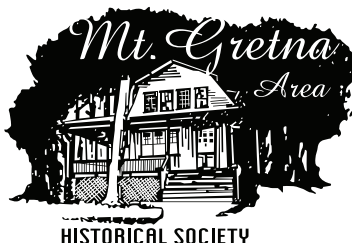
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THE MGAHS MUSEUM is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, 1-4pm, or by appointment.

We offer school and group tours, summer walking tours, and research assistance on an appointment basis throughout the year.

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## MGAHS Events



*Soldier's Field Dedication- Summer 2019  
Information on page 4.*

## Sarah Tyson Rorer

(cont.)

In addition, Sarah was an editor for and part owner of Household News and a Philadelphia magazine — Table Talk, published by Finley's Fine Foods. She owned a New York City restaurant for a short time.

Outside of her work in Mount Gretna, she also gave lectures in the Lebanon County community, participated in local causes and visited friends in the city of Lebanon. In 1906, Rorer became embroiled in a local civil lawsuit. In a news article, Dr. A.B. Gloninger, who operated the Lebanon Sanitorium hospital, claimed that she owed him \$50 as the result of a case he handled in 1905. Gloninger contended that he admitted and treated a young girl who was in need of medical care to his hospital in July 1905. Presumably, Rorer had sent the girl to the hospital. The girl remained in the hospital for three weeks, the news article reported. The doctor argued that Rorer "promised to meet any cost that accrued" for her treatment. However, Rorer argued that she simply advised the girl to go to the hospital and had not agreed to pay for any treatment.

Sarah Tyson Rorer Hall was opened in 1897. Culinary classes for the Chautauqua were held there. The building only remained for just over a decade before being torn down in 1908 to make room for the new Hall of Philosophy. In 1910, she opened a Curio shop on the Chautauqua grounds, the proceeds of which went to help defray the cost of the Hall of Philosophy, which still stands next to the Jigger Shop at 212 Gettysburg Avenue.

In addition to her lectures in Mount Gretna, Rorer was often asked to give presentations to local groups, such as the Woman's clubs.

For instance, in 1918, she gave a lecture on how to feed a family of three on \$5 a week. She discussed meat and meat substitutes, such as certain vegetables. In her talk, she also referenced her own research on the diets of peoples around the world. In her lecture, she also pitched the idea of using less meat and wheat in daily cooking so that there would be more of these types of rations for the American soldiers serving overseas during World War I. Rorer also taught classes in Mt. Gretna, which revolved around recipes and cooking skills, but also about the chemistry of food and the digestive system, which was revolutionary for the time.



*Pictured: Sarah Tyson Rorer in her Philadelphia School.*

# Sarah Tyson Rorer

(cont.)

After renting a cottage in Mt. Gretna for a considerable time, Rorer decided to build her own in 1898, which she named "Dragonfly." Rorer was known to dislike the design of most of the cottages in Mt. Gretna, saying, "I do hope the time will come when architects will wake up and get some new ideas. These cottages are simply monstrosities." An annoyed neighbor responded to this comment by saying, "Yet, Mrs. Rorer's cottage is absolutely the ugliest on the grounds." By 1912, Rorer was considered a permanent resident of Mt. Gretna, though by the end of the 1920s, she had settled in Colebrook. Her residence there later became the Colebrook Post Office.

Like many people during the Depression, Tyson suffered financially during the Great Depression, losing much of her investments.

In the 1930s, she continued to lecture and participate in local and national events and gave lectures on local and national issues, not just cooking. In 1931, Rorer was elected as the first president of the Lebanon County League of Democratic Women, a position she held for seven years until her death. In the fall of 1934, the League held a surprise party for her 84th birthday. At the party, she proudly read a letter she received from President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A news article described her as a close personal friend of the president and his wife Eleanor. In late December 1937 she became seriously ill. She injured her hip. She developed pneumonia and died at her home in Colebrook on Dec. 27, 1937. She was 88 years old. Her grave is located in the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church cemetery in Colebrook.



[www.vintagecookbook.com](http://www.vintagecookbook.com)

## List of Sarah Tyson Rorer's Most Famous Works

- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's New Cook Book: A Manual of Housekeeping*
- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's Cook Book*
- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's Every Day Menu Book*
- ❖ *Bread and Bread Making: How to Make Many Varieties Easily and With the Best Results*
- ❖ *Canning and Preserving*
- ❖ *Fifteen New Ways for Oysters*
- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's Diet for the Sick:*
- ❖ *Left Overs: How to Transform Them Into Palatable and Wholesome Dishes, With Many New and Valuable Recipes*
- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's Key to Simple Cooking*
- ❖ *How to Cook Vegetables*
- ❖ *Good Cooking*
- ❖ *Dainties*
- ❖ *Hot Weather Dishes*
- ❖ *How to Use a Chafing Dish*
- ❖ *Many Ways for Cooking Eggs*
- ❖ *Mrs. Rorer's Vegetable Cookery and Meat Substitutes*



Coming in May 2020, the museum will feature two new showcases; one highlighting Sarah Tyson Rorer and one highlighting the town of Colebrook.

\*Due to the quality and age of newspaper, images are slightly blurred.\*

## CLASH OF COOKS SHAKES PLACID CHAUTAQUA

Mrs. Rorer and Miss Colling  
the Principal Actors in a  
School Comedy.

### JEALOUSY IN THE PLOT

Miss Colling Took Mrs. Rorer's  
Place on the Mt. Gretna Plat-  
form, and the Latter Sought  
Satisfaction.



MRS. SARAH TYSON RORER

MISS EMILY MARION COLLINGS

Miss Colling was delivering one of her lectures one morning when she was surprised to see Mrs. Rorer walk into the room and take a seat on the front settee. It was the first intimation she had had that her old preceptress was in the neighborhood. Even then she scented no danger, but went on with her discourse as if nothing unusual had happened, or as if no unlooked for visitor had appeared.

#### Why Mrs Rorer Was Pained.

When she had concluded her remarks Miss Colling, in the spirit of deepest friendship, stepped down from the platform, and going to where Mrs. Rorer sat extended her hand.

Mrs. Rorer folded her arms haughtily.

The snub was plain.

"Miss Colling," said she, "I am pained to hear you make the statement that milk boils at 203 degrees. It is quite absurd. You should know better."

The younger woman was dumfounded. She could make no reply and as she drew back Mrs. Rorer rose and left the place.

Such a thing, unheard of in the very decorous community, was sure food for gossip, and it flew from cottage to cottage. Every other instructor in the camp took sides with Miss Colling, and as Mrs. Rorer has many personal friends there it looked as if there would surely be a tumult. But the worst was yet to come. There was more trouble in store for the young lecturer. She was scheduled for a discourse on "The Cooking of Meats." Mrs. Rorer showed up bright and early, accompanied by one of her own set. They took prominent seats.

#### Miss Collings Was Game.

Miss Colling began to discuss some of the economical meat dishes. Mrs. Rorer and her friend ostentatiously paid no attention to her remarks, but engaged in a personal conver-

Continued on Third Page.

## CLASH OF COOKS SHAKE PLACID CHAUTAQUA

Continued From First Page.

sation in tones that were quite audible through the lecture room.

Miss Colling was game to the core, and, as if nothing unexpected was occurring, went on to explain how to cook Hamburg steaks, with scarcely any fat, stating that they would be more wholesome and much more palatable than if fat was used in the process.

The others continued their conversation.

"Where broiling is out of the question," said Miss Colling, "we resort to a method known as pan broiling, which is next best."

Hum, hum, hum went the others.

"Great care," Miss Colling explained, "should be taken to avoid the escape of the juice of the meat, as it is the juice which gives it the flavor."

Hum, hum, hum, as before.

The lecture was scarcely the success that Miss Colling would have wished it to be, but there seemed to be no redress. It was a case of grin and bear it, and this she did. She never faltered, and nothing that has been done has caused her to swerve that she offered the following courses:

#### No Harm in the Programme.

When she went to Mt. Gretna she believed she knew her business thoroughly and it was with full confidence in her ability that she offered the following courses:

- 1—A course for nurses and others interested in sick diet. Thirty lessons, including materials, \$25.
- 2—Practical work, where dishes may be prepared by pupils, under the direction of the principal. Five lessons, including materials, \$2.50.
- 3—Children's classes (once a week). Five lessons, not including materials, \$2.50.
- 4—Gentlemen's classes in carving and chafing dish cookery. Ten lessons, not including materials, \$5.

It was a simple, innocent programme she mapped out for herself, a plain, straightforward, unassuming schedule, as harmless and as unapt to give an opening for jealousy as the prattle of a babe. At that time she could not discern the spectre. Then there was a course of public lectures to be delivered by Miss Colling in the Chautauqua Auditorium, where 2,000 could be seated and in comfort listen to her tell of:

- 1—"Soups, With and Without Stock." Tomato soup, cream of pea soup, bouillon.
- 2—"The Cooking of Meats" (above referred to). Cannelon of beef with mushroom sauce, Hamburg steak with tomato sauce.
- 3—"How to Utilise Left-overs." Vegetable salad, hash in ambush, meat croquettes.
- 4—"Some Dainty Vegetable Dishes." Cauliflower a la Hollandaise, potatoes on the half shell, stuffed tomatoes.
- 5—"Hot Breads." Baking powder biscuits, muffins, gems, fruit rolls.

Where, in such an enumeration of household subjects, could one find less pretentiousness, less danger? Miss Colling saw

#### Athletics and Furnishings

We don't claim to be mod-  
est. We do claim to know

none, looked for none. She went forward without thought of a hidden enemy. She prepared her manuscripts and studied the situations. Her single idea was to add new laurels to her already enviable reputation as a teacher of the popular science of gastronomy.

#### Many Support New Teacher.

And, in spite of her experiences, she has gone forward with never a turning back, until now she is nearly finished with her work. The "hot bread" lecture is due this afternoon.

Strange to relate, too, nearly all of Miss Colling's work has been done in a special building, which bears the name of her predecessor, being called the Sarah Tyson Rorer Hall. It is a small frame structure, but it is roomy enough for all practical purposes and is provided with all the latest appliances.

An enrolment of the 2,000 persons that make up the Chautauqua community would surely show a host of supporters for Miss Colling, who would give her without asking the heartiest indorsement of the genius with which she has presided over the destinies of that little school of domestic economy in the Sarah Tyson Rorer Hall. Her partisans point with pride to the record she has achieved in the comparatively few years of her experience.

With them, she is always a lady of rare culture and refinement, displayed as much in her "little talks to housewives" as in her detailed expositions of the technique of the chafing dish or the various methods of constructing a Welsh rarebit. She is a competent and entertaining speaker when discussing the hash lurking in yesterday's leftover meats and a successful instructor when demonstrating how not to burn a porterhouse or scorch a chicken.

#### Lots of Room for Two.

Why, these partisans ask, should there be any room for jealousy when Miss Colling can vividly portray the beauties of mutton stew or huckleberry puddings, salad dressings or Japanese lemon pie?

Miss Colling has made herself very popular at Mount Gretna while Mrs. Rorer seems to have gone the other way. One of the Chautauqua cottagers describes Mrs. Rorer as looking over the various buildings there and saying, with a sneer:

"I do hope the time will come when architects will wake up and get some new ideas. These cottages are simply monstrosities."

"Yet," says this Chautauquan, "Mrs. Rorer's cottage is absolutely the ugliest on the grounds."

Mrs. Rorer has not confined her flings to Miss Colling. One of the other lecturers at Mt. Gretna was Herr Gustavus Cohen, formerly of London. In the course of his remarks he had something to say about palmistry.

"I don't believe," he said, "that the man who goes to a palmist will ever learn anything intelligent, and, what is more, no man of intelligence would go to one."

It happens that Mrs. Rorer is a devotee of palmistry. When she had heard the herr out she rose from her seat.

"I shall not remain here any longer and listen to such trash."

Then she whisked herself out of the auditorium.

Miss Colling was a member of the class of 1892 at the Philadelphia Cooking School, and graduated at the head of her class. The next three years were spent in teaching. One year she was instructor in the mystic science of cooking at the Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va., and the other two years were spent in the cooking schools of New Orleans, Cincinnati and Davenport, Iowa. For nearly two years now she has devoted most of her time to lecturing. Last summer she lec-

# Soldier's Field Dedication - Summer 2019

We had good weather and a great crowd as 250 people joined us for the dedication and encampment on the newly purchased portion of Soldiers Field. A huge thank you to Luke Gammache and Jim Abels who initiated contacted with the Historical Society in 2018 and then organized and led the group of soldiers representing Co.H, 4th Regt, NGP. These living historians shared what life would have been like during the time of training in 1898 for the Spanish American War. Our thanks as well to SGT. Damian Smith of the PA National Guard who met with our committee and guided us as well provided materials and connections for us as we planned the day. Our 1918 Dodge Army truck, once used in Mt. Gretna and now owned and beautifully restored by Doug Walters, made its appearance. Also, representing the National Sons and Daughters of the Spanish-American War, were Jim and Pat McAteer (former and current Presidents) and approximately thirty members who toured the monuments and held their closing ceremonies here in Mt. Gretna.



## Then and Now

By Morgan Smith

The Colebrook Iron Master's House, also known as the Colebrook Mansion is a historic home located in South Londonderry Township. It was built between 1791 and 1796 by Robert Coleman, great grandfather to Robert H. Coleman of Mt. Gretna and Pennsylvania's first millionaire.



# Summer 2019

## History on the Porch



Fourteen folks, curious about Mount Gretna, Colebrook and Cornwall histories joined us on the porch of the Historical Society on August 10th. Hosted by Fred Buch, subjects ranged from PA National Guard stories to the narrow gauge railroad to the Coleman family and to an apron, recently donated to us, worn by a waitress at the Chautauqua Inn. You never know what topics will come up but the discussions are always lively and you can always learn something new. Join us next summer on June 13th, July 11th and August 8th for coffee and conversation.

## Pennsylvania Dutch Presidents

July 5th, popular speaker, Jean-Paul Benowitz from Elizabethtown College shared how Pennsylvania Dutch culture, traditions and philosophy formed the domestic and foreign policies of U.S. presidents. He will be joining us again on July 3rd, 2020.



## Life of a Collier

Hard work in the hills defined the life of colliers, men who made the charcoal that fueled the iron furnaces of the 18th and 19th centuries. On August 23rd, Rick Brouse gave an informative talk about this important part of our area's history.



On July 6th, Ron Hontz led a History Walk highlighting Abraham Kauffman's Mt. Gretna Heights.

## Legend of the Hounds

On Saturday, October 26th, the South Londonderry Township Area Historical Society, with the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society presented "A Brief History of Colebrook and Its Furnace," which was completed with a special reading of George Boker's "The Legend of the Hounds."

Within this "Legend" is a poem telling the story of a dissolute Squire of Cornwall. As the legend goes, he took revenge upon his hounds for refusing to hunt by throwing them into the Colebrook Iron Furnace.

**A Brief History of Colebrook and Its Furnace**  
with a Reading of *The Legend of THE HOUNDS*  
By GEORGE HENRY BOKER

**Saturday, Oct. 26**  
**7 pm**  
Hall of Philosophy  
(next to the Jigger Shop)

Presented by  
The South Londonderry Township Area Historical Society  
with the  
Mount Gretna Area Historical Society  
Refreshments will be served • Donations appreciated

Note: The cruel fate of the hounds at the hands of Colebrook's Iron Master and their supernatural return may not be suitable for young children or the faint of heart.

**Questions? Call 717.964.1105**

# Thank You Thank You

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Taylor Miller Pipe Organ Company, York

Timbers Restaurant and Dinner Theatre

# Thank You

## Thank You

# Thank You Thank You Thank You

## NEW MEMBERS (as of June - December 2019)

Welcome to our new members who have made a special commitment to support the ongoing programs and projects of the Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society:

Casey Family

Mr. Richard Smith

Thank You

Ed and Jess Kosoff

Mr. Ross Buchanan

Mary Jo and Louis Dorogi

Ms. Allison Barthold

Mr. and Mrs. James and Katherine Adame

Ms. Beverly A. Munz

Vincent Montano

Mr. Ernest Kepner

## On Our Wish List

In addition to monetary donations, our mission to preserve history cannot be done without proper supplies! We are seeking to purchase an archival quality filing cabinet at roughly \$2,500. We have many historical posters, signs, photographs, maps, and other large items that require flat storage. Any donors for this endeavor shall receive naming rights for the cabinet. Please contact us at [mtgretnahistory@gmail.com](mailto:mtgretnahistory@gmail.com) or call (717)-964-1105 to leave a message if you are interested in supporting this purchase.

THE MGAHS extends deepest gratitude to the **Anne Brossman-Sweigart Foundation** for their generosity in contributing to our endowment. Building our endowment ensures MGAHS financial stability and allows us to pursue expansion and continuation of preserving our historical artifacts.



### HOW TO LEAVE A LEGACY GIFT



IMAGINE what Robert Coleman would think if he could see Mt. Gretna today? Many of our greatest community assets exist because someone thought it important enough to bequeath funds to develop and sustain it.

If you would like more information on leaving a legacy gift to the Mount Gretna Area

Historical Society, contact David Wood, or call (717) 964-1105.

Consultation with a legal or financial adviser can help you to take advantage of any savings in inheritance tax. Our MGAHS representative will help guide you through the process and the details.



P.O. Box 362  
Mt. Gretna, PA 17064  
(717) 964-1105  
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Yes, I want to support Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society

- \$20 Individual Membership     \$30 Family Membership  
 \$75 Business Membership

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- Check enclosed (payable to Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society, )  
 Master Card     Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 362, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064

## In this Issue...

You will find information on the heritage of the entire Mount Gretna area: Mount Gretna Borough, the Pennsylvania Chautauqua, Mount Gretna Campmeeting, Mount Gretna Heights, Timber Hills, Conewago Hill, Stoberdale, areas extending to Colebrook that were once occupied by the Pennsylvania National Guard and areas of Cornwall with Coleman family connections.

Learn about some of our historic monuments that are still in existence today, and many that have left their mark, though they are long gone.

Explore the history of the Narrow Gauge Railroad, the Mt. Gretna Brickyard, and more, as we help to preserve and to highlight Mt. Gretna Area History.

## Mark Your Calendar

June 13, 2020 - History on the Porch  
July 3, 2020- Speaker Jean-Paul Benowitz  
July 11, 2020- History on the Porch  
July 10, 2020- Speaker Dick Martin  
August 8, 2020- History on the Porch