

# CURATOR'S REPORT

## THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 11, 2014

Stewart Saylor and David Hay represented the Berlin Area Historical Society at the 2014 Convention of the Somerset County Historical Organizations on Feb. 22 at the Somerset Historical Society. There were six historical societies represented from Somerset County in addition to the Somerset County Historical and Genealogical Society. For the most part, it was an interesting session and a good opportunity to learn about happenings in the various historical societies. Most societies lamented about being short of volunteers. Fortunately we have dependable, knowledgeable and interesting volunteers to assist each of the three days we are open. Of course, we're always open to welcoming new volunteers. One of the most interesting things about the convention was the opportunity your curator had to learn preservation ideas and to participate in the "behind the scenes" tour of their storage area.

### DR. WILLIAM P. SHAW'S MEDICINE BOTTLE DONATED



**Lester and LaVerne Coslic** donated the above embossed medicine bottle with the name of W. P. Shaw, M.D. – a well-known Berlin area family doctor in the earlier decades of the 1900s. They also donated a collection of local milk and beverage bottles including a milk bottle from the former Swift's Dairy that was operated by the John B. Swift family at their former farm along the Garrett Short-cut. Another donation from the Coslic home was a hat made from the feathers of pheasants for Nora Suder, LaVerne's mother. Her father, Harry Suder raised pheasants for the Roof Garden Sportsman's Club in the 1960s. We are **searching** for a picture of the John B. Swift barn that was destroyed by fire.

**Anna May Weighley** donated a copper cross and the March 1950 issue of Vistor, a publication of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. **Lynn Brant** donated the Madison and Emma (Coleman) Brant family bible. **Terry Rhodes** donated a 1937 Reader's Digest. **Charles and Hilda Mowry** donated a Philson Bank Letter opener. **Irene (Eash) Shultz** donated a quantity of The Viklet school newspapers from Shanksville along with other miscellaneous items. **Gerald Boyd** paid \$200.00 to become our latest lifetime member.

## AMONG OUR LATEST ACQUISITIONS:



**ADA SUSAN MILLER  
(ALTFATHER)**

Among the collection of soda and milk bottles donated by **Lester and LaVerne Coslic** was the **Swift's Dairy** glass milk bottle pictured above. John and Goldie Swift – assisted by family members – operated their dairy at their farm along the Garrett Short-cut in Brothersvalley Township for a few years. The bottle – advertising delicious chocolate milk for lunch and Swift's dairy products – is a rare collector's item. The picture on the right features **Ada Susan Miller (Altfather)**, who according to the wedding certificate on the next page, was married on May 3, 1903 by Pastor P. W. Miller to **George F. Altfather**. Among the couple's children was Miss M. Geneva Altfather, long-time art teacher at the Berlin Brothersvalley High School. The picture, wedding certificate, and a collection of 1898 and 1899 letters addressed to Ada Miller at Pugh, Downey, and Berlin addresses were donated by **R. Donald Williams**. Apparently Ada resided with families and assisted with their household chores.

Here is the sampling of an **October 22, 1899** letter: **Miss Ada Miller** – Pugh, Somerset County. “Can you come and live with me at once? A woman from Philadelphia is taking my girl home with her. If possible come on Monday either to stay all winter or to stay until I find some one else. If you can't come, please let me know by return mail, so I waste no time in looking for some one else. The wages you know are \$1.25 (per week) and no washing. There are only four families in town (Somerset) who pay over \$1.50 and they require every thing from their girls. All the girls who get \$1.50 weekly have to do the washing.” Very sincerely yours, **Mrs. John F. Nichol**

# IN THE VILLAGE OF JOHNSBURG



**LANA REBECCA (KEEFER) BRICK AND DAUGHTER LOTTIE BRICK**

Larry Pritts loaned us a photo album with various programs from various BBHS productions, photos, and other memorabilia. One of the photos that we copied features the two Johnsburg residents pictured above. Lottie A. Brick, a daughter of George and Lana Rebecca (Keefer) Brick, operated a small store and sold gasoline at the family home in the village of Johnsburg, Northampton Township. Larry remembers visiting with his family at the Brick home. Lottie gave him a candy bar from the shelves of her store. Larry also donated a program from BBHS Basketball's 2014 Senior Night activities. It features pictures and highlights about both the boys' and girls' senior players.

No. 5905

## Original Certificate.

*To be given to the persons married.*

I, P. W. Miller, hereby certify that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of May one thousand nine hundred and Three, at my residence, Geo. W. Alfather and Ada S. Miller were by me united in marriage in accordance with license issued by the Clerk of the Orphans' Court of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, Numbered 5905

P. W. Miller

*Minister of the Gospel, Justice of the Peace or Alderman.*

Roland Fogle (Berlin Cemetery Association) donated an updated listing and map of persons buried in the Berlin IOOF Cemetery. Our newly purchased micro-film reader/printer has arrived and is being set up by Stew Saylor. We sent approximately 170 cards to members whose 2014 membership dues hadn't been paid and we've had a good response to those cards. A thank you is extended to our faithful volunteers for all they do to keep the wheels moving smoothly!

David R. Hay, Curator

# THE HEAVY SNOW DEPOSITS OF FEBRUARY 1936



George Poorbaugh, a retired farmer along the Garrett Short Cut, loaned us a series of 1936 snow pictures that were taken by the Rock Studio of Somerset. We have copied many of the photos pertaining to the Berlin and Shanksville areas including the two photos that appear on this page. The top photo shows Route 219 north leaving Berlin while the lower photo depicts Broadway at the southern edges of Berlin. Both areas are known yet today for their heavy deposits of snow.

