

Good Purpose



*Preserving the heritage of
Old Westmoreland County
for tomorrow's
generations.*

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What is this?

It is approximately 2 inches by 2 1/2 inches. It is made of metal and the part at the top closes. There is a small handle at the side that turns the mechanism on the inside.



They Did WHAT By The Fireside?

By Lydia Greenberg from the blog Soup Kitchen Disco (soupkitchendisco.wordpress.com)

I am by no means a librarian. I am, however, a historian, so old print materials do tend to fall into my lap every now and then. These forgotten magazine articles, books, diary entries, and manuals tell us so much about the intricacies and mundanities of years gone past – it would be a shame to leave such discoveries buried in attics and closets. Join me as I leaf through the pages of today's edition of Ink and Dust.

Years ago, for a different historical project, I stumbled upon Cornell University's online archive of Good Housekeeping magazine. Remembering this, I revisited the archive and got to work reading through recipes, crochet patterns, and a particularly scathing piece condemning piano practice. Finally, I found an article that detailed games meant to be played at dinner parties. This article was only part one, however, and the prospect of sifting through years-worth of Good Housekeeping to find the subsequent additions was a daunting one.

Thankfully, the author of the articles, Lucretia P. Hale, was kind enough to compile everything together. Thanks to her 1888 book "Fagots for the Fireside", we have a lovely little collection of over one hundred games that were played in the 1880s in America. At the time, the term fagot referred to a measure of firewood. Hale explains that the book was titled so "as its object is to keep up the glow of the family fireside in the long winter evenings". What a lovely idea – quality games shared with loved ones bringing about as much warmth as a roaring fireplace.

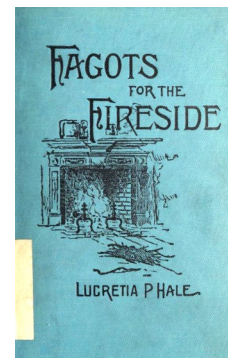
So what games did our ancestors play? Hale details card games, logic games, drawing games, word games, and – most wonderfully – games familiar to our twenty-first century sensibilities. For example, "Twenty Questions" is present just as we play it in modern-day. There's also a game by the name of "Hanging", which presents a key difference

from today's Hangman. Instead of only having one noose on the gallows, there is a noose for each player. Another game that might be recognizable is "Doublets". If you've ever seen the game show "Chain Reaction", you might know of the word game wherein you change one letter at a time to transform one word into another. For example, I'll show you how to turn "CAT" into "DOG":

CAT ->COT->DOT->DOG

Musical chairs is also among the games listed here, though it hadn't gotten that name quite yet. Instead, it is described as "Going to Jerusalem". This is the one I find most fascinating, as we tend to paint our ancestors, especially of this era, as stuffy and no-nonsense. I hope it makes you laugh to imagine your however-many-great-grandparents running around the parlor with their petticoats and cravats, playing musical chairs to the tune of a piano.

Alas, while our ancestors in the 1880s may not have had Scrabble, Uno, or Monopoly, they nonetheless managed to entertain themselves with games. Having fun with friends and family has brought us together throughout the years, decades, and centuries. With this in mind, consider setting your computer and phone aside for an evening to bring out some of your old favorite games. You never know what favorites you'll re-discover!



Baltzer Meyer Historical Society
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and Lori Myers
Genealogy - Lori Myers

Winter Hours are dependent on weather. If there is even a chance of the weather turning bad, we will be closed. Please contact LMyers@baltzermeyer.com to ensure we are open before making the trip out!

Genealogy Library Hours:

1st Saturday of the month only day Lori is scheduled to be on site 10am- 2 pm (feel free to email Lmyers@baltzermeyer.com to verify we will be open)

Thursdays 10-3

Wednesday nights 6-8

3rd Saturday of the month 10-2

Upcoming Events

March 24rd 2024 2 PM-4 PM Patti Flowers, a Penn State Master Gardener, will inform us on how to use native species to create your own pollinator garden. Native plants are considered the best choice because of their abundance of nectar and pollen in addition to being low maintenance, generally pest free, drought tolerant, and ability to control erosion. They are good sources of food and shelter for wildlife, and naturally beautiful.

April 13th 2024 1 PM-3 PM Author Series Tom Powers will share the details of the tragic Allegheny Arsenal explosion in Lawrenceville. It was the worst civilian disaster during the Civil War. It was a critical supply outlet for the Union Army where workers manufactured gunpowder, cartridges, harnesses and other equipment needed for the Civil War. Tom along with James Wudarczyk are the authors of: [The Allegheny Arsenal Handbook](#).

April 21st 2024 Open House 12-4PM Author Series

Join us for our annual Open House. Come see the changes at Baltzer Meyer Historical Society. Our Library will look a little different. There will be new displays in Harrold Hall and much more. Don't forget a tour of Harrold School #8. **John Plischke** will speak on Edible Wild Mushrooms. Copies of his book, [Good Mushroom, Bad Mushroom](#) will be available.

April 27th 2024 10 AM-3 PM Experience the Greensburg arts scene during **ArtsWalk**, a day of discovering the visual and performing arts our town has to offer. Pick up your roadmap and set off on a self-guided walking tour of downtown Greensburg exploring the work of local, regional and national artists at each stop.

May 4th 2024 11-1 PM Senior Brunch and Emergency Readiness with the American Red Cross representative Ronel Baccus.

May 18th 2024 1 PM-3 PM Author Series James Sagan traces three early generations of his family as they travel from Ireland to British America and eventually "become American," settling into life as part of western Pennsylvania. Along the way, they deal with death, danger, extreme conditions, and even the intricacies of owning land in a place just becoming a country. Jim will have copies of his book, [The Journey Forward](#).

June 8th 2024 12-2 PM

Ronel Baccus will be speaking about the Commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862.

June 22nd 2024 1 PM-3 PM

John Hepple to speak on the Darr Mine disaster at Van Meter, Rostraver Township, near Smithton, that killed 239 men and boys on December 19, 1907. It ranks as the worst coal mining disaster in Pennsylvanian history. Many victims were of immigrants from central Europe,

July 13th 2024 1 PM-3 PM

Ken Williams recognizes the importance of the Battle of Gettysburg. Williams' family has special ties to the Civil War. When people think of the Battle of Gettysburg, their mind typically goes to the actions that played out on the battlefields. But what is commonly overlooked is the experience of the people who lived in Gettysburg who were affected by the battle long after the cannons fell silent.

July 27th 1 PM-3 PM Ron Maxson will speak about Marine Corp history

Nick's Notes—I am pleased to announce that 2023 was a very good year for the Baltzer Meyer Historical Society. We were awarded the Chamber Champion Award from the Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce for the month of October.

We have increased our membership, museum, and library acquisitions. Due to the hard work of our dedicated volunteers and contributors we held at least 15 functions this past year allowing more people to know what Baltzer Meyer has to offer regarding our area's vast history.

This year starting in March we are going to have at least 20 talks on the history of our area and highlighting at least 7 local authors, as well as continuing the expansion of our library and museum.

We are actively asking for more volunteers and contributors, and we would love to have you.

Please check our website www.baltzermeyer.com and our Facebook page for more information.

Society Happenings

Correction from last newsletter: due to resizing the first page, the volume and issue were omitted. Should have been volume 30, Fall/winter. We also apologize for the misspelling of member **Sarah Currykosky's** name.

ACCESSIONS:

1770 items were donated. Here is a listing of how many in each category were donated. A big thank you to everyone that brought in items for our museum and library!

10 architecture	6 Art
42 atlas/maps	1350 books
20 business/farm	1 ceramic/glass
7 ecclesiastical	21 electronics
1 family genealogy	39 household
59 Journal/newsletter	53 magazines
10 military	1 misc.
5 musical	24 paper
14 photography	16 school
80 textiles	1 tools
2 toy	8 yearbooks

Archives: The Thursday upstairs library/ archive crew has been working hard the last quarter of the year. By prepping an old wooden shelving unit for a church display. We also sorted, logged and boxed up over 300 books by state. Then moved four file cabinets into the library to house local resource books. Our hope for 2024 is to create new displays that you will enjoy on your next visit.

Grants: Old Joe Club Charities awarded Baltzer Meyer Historical Society a grant of \$2500. This money has been used to replace the stone windowsills on the cemetery side of the building. The stone was flaking and needed replaced. The windows now need new glazing, painted, and refinished on the inside. The school was built in 1881 and always has some maintenance projects that need done. We are continuously in need of volunteers who can do some of this work or money to complete the projects. We are a 501 c3 organization so your donations are tax deductible.

Westmoreland County Awards Tourism Grants :In De-

ember the County Commissioners approved 58 tourism grants for 2024, generated through the county's 5% hotel tax. Baltzer Meyer was pleased to be a recipient of one of the grants. We were awarded \$1,721.25 to be used for marketing. One of the things you will see is our brochures stocked in area tourism information racks. We are very happy to have been awarded this grant and opportunity to spread the word about this great organization.



The Digital Department—Our digital workers continue learning from the process of scanning various media into our growing database.

As the number of Garden Club notebooks dwindles, we are learning from the work what gifts many members in and around Greensburg have given us over the years. From the smiles in the pictures as the seasons change, we can see the rewards the members of various garden clubs have gained by giving and beautifying many areas.

As we started last year, 2023, we were scanning booklets and historical documents reporting the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Westmoreland County.

Donations of materials at times reveal how businesses kept their ledgers and how ministers listed births, marriages, and deaths, and Sunday school teachers recorded attendance.

We were surprised at the richness of materials which were kept in scrapbooks from the mid twentieth century, and we are humbled by the lives revealed during major world events as people lived their lives while waiting for their loved ones to return.

Scrapbooks reveal what people found important enough to record about their school, work, and military careers. As we record their contents, we get glimpses into how other generations valued being alive.

We hope that our efforts will preserve and protect as well as educate residents and researchers in Westmoreland County and beyond about the lives of their ancestors in the area since the mid seventeen hundreds.

As 2024 begins we continue to be gifted with contributions of scrapbooks, booklets, and pictures to add to the collection. Baltzer Meyer Historical Society could benefit from more volunteers. Thank you for a very educational year.

IT DEPARTMENT: This is our newest committee. The past year we accomplished logging and tagging our computer equipment to help us keep track of inventory and its location. This included laptops, desktops and various peripherals. We also installed additional security cameras around the facility. Storage capacity to keep camera video recordings was increased to 2Tb. The file server is continuing to work properly and there is enough hard drive storage available at least for another year.

MEMBERSHIP: We ended 2023 membership at Baltzer Meyer with 139 members, 47 Life members and 92 Regular members. 2024 membership is looking promising with 63 regular members so far.

More on Old School Buildings *Delver Smith*

Some members have given me information about previous schoolhouses in Hempfield, including pictures of some classes of students and some insight as to how the Hempfield Area School District came together.

My mental picture of the district focused more on the secondary schools, and I could not have named all the elementary schools in Hempfield present when I started teaching in 1967. During my thirty-six-year career I saw the district as having one high school, four junior high schools, and thirteen elementary schools.

If my summary of the Hempfield Area School District was correct, it was only for a brief time, because the district was always changing. Thank you to those members and readers who have shared more about the district and surrounding areas.

A couple checked with us to find out about a former school building near the crest of Old Airport Road near West Point. Using a location map of Hempfield Township buildings made in 1938, I found a building, but I cannot read the name of the building. Does anyone remember a one or two room school building predating the second world war?

John Hilewick allowed me to share the following information about other small school buildings (some that our gone, and some that have been repurposed). John mentioned that the Manor school is not on the list, and he also revealed that the Pennsylvania Department of Education had imposed a consolidation which became the Hempfield Area Consolidated District.

John also explained that the Lincoln Heights Civic Association repurposed a multi room building off Andrews Avenue that had been known as Lincoln Heights school. I attended a function at the Civic Association back in 1966, not knowing that it had been a former Hempfield school.

John mentioned a building once possibly known as Old Stanton, a one room school which may have been a primary school. BMHS has scanned yearbooks from Old Stanton in what used to be part of Hempfield. The former school serves as a residence now.

John's wife, Debbie, taught as a stringed instrument instructor in the Brush Creek school along the Penn Manor Road in 1975. She remembers teaching in the basement or in a "crawl space area with a dirt floor".

John also mentions a Liberty Hill school on the Middletown-Madison road having been replaced by another building near the same site, a brick structure, that may be a, "newer rendition of the Liberty School." Thank you both, John and Debbie, for these details. I look forward to following up on these.

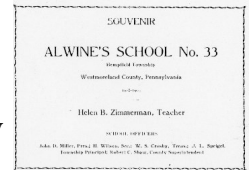
Finally, we were lent images of two other schools, one a picture of our own Baltzer Meyer building with a class picture taken there years ago, and several others of classes in front of the Myers school. I had to scan them during a program on the

First Nation people to return them within that time.

Baltzer Meyer is located in Hempfield's center, near to Fort Allen, but I am also interested in other districts if any members have information concerning their history. Please contact me at dsmith@baltzermeyer.com.

A Donated Scrapbook *Delver B. Smith,*

Sue Hutton donated a notebook containing information about Alwine's School, now the Alwine Civic Center off Old Route 66 a little north of Greensburg. I knew that my great grandparents on my father's side grew up on farms near there, and I thought that they might have attended that school in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The following confirms that by listing my grandmother and her older brother as classmates during school year 1908-1909.



NAMES OF PUPILS		
Nebel Shuster	Luick Krammer	Lawrence Krammer
Edwin Hump	Phyllis Hump	Charles Beckler
John Fink	Verde Krammer	John Zimmerman
Janet Krammer	Henry Krammer	Paul Gange
LeRoy Shuster	Paul Krammer	Maybelle Krammer
Alvin Hump	Mabel Shuster	Stan Krammer
Helen Shust	John Krammer	Hester Krammer
Gene Fink	John Hump	William Fink
Harold Beckler	Charles Gange	Henry Miller

The first name, Mabel Shuster, is that of my grandmother who married Frank Smith Sr., my grandfather in 1914. Six names down in the middle column is the name LeRoy Shuster, Mabel's older brother. Mabel would have been fourteen in 1909, and LeRoy would have

been sixteen.

This little souvenir confirmed for me that my grandmother attended Alwine's School. Baltzer Meyer Historical Society and I certainly appreciate the gifts donated to be scanned for the future.

In Like a Lion Out Like a Lamb *Lori Myers*

As March rolled in I spared a few minutes to wonder where this common phrase that I'd heard my entire life came from. So, I hit the almighty Google (what did we ever do before it?).



The first documented use of it comes from a 1732 book of proverbs titled, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Saying, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British*. There we find it is meteorological in nature. March is a month of transition; Old Man Winter leaves the scene sometimes not so peacefully, we can usually expect a few snow flurries, but we all know by the end of the month, Spring will be spreading her green blanket and the weather calms a bit. At least we hope so.

Another way March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb is astrologically. As we begin March, Leo the ferocious lion rules the heavens, ushering in Pisces, and as we end, Aries, the gentle ram takes his rule. I'd never thought of that. It's an interesting bit of knowledge that I'll tuck away and pull out at some trivia night in the future.

And the final and most profound (at least to me), is biblical. Jesus is called both a lion and a lamb in the bible. Christ came into Jerusalem as a lion (at least the Jewish people hoped he was) and left as a lamb. A sacrificial lamb. I will admit, this one never crossed my mind, but to me, this one clearly will make me delve a bit deeper into it.



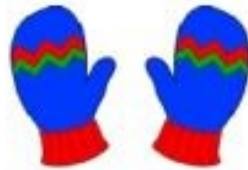
What is it? (from page 1) It is a double edge razorblade sharpener in the original box, this one was sold by JC Penney



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
GENEROUS DONATIONS!!
**THANKS TO YOU HARROLD HALL
IS WARM ONCE AGAIN!!**



Barb Errett
John Klein
Delver Smith
Jonie Damico



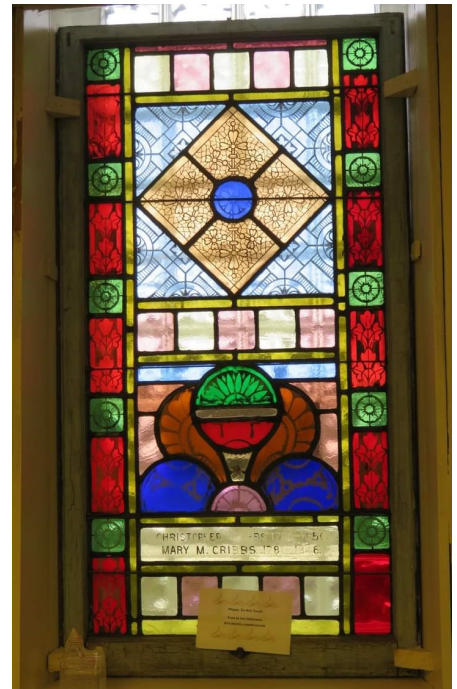
Tom Harrold
Craig & Jill
Rau
Delver Smith



Margaret Gagliardi
Joan Drexler
Michael Mensich
Will Maurer & Carol
McKenzie
Gary Hammack
Donna Ruble



Tom Harrold
Gary Hammack
Margaret Gagliardi
Donna Ruble



Upper left– new library set up

Upper right– Cribbs window

Left– Military uniform display

Lower and lower right– archive displays

Lower left– Author Brady Crytzer talks about the Whiskey Rebellion



Franny's Photos from around BMHS