



Fulton House News

Derry Area Historical Society News Fall 2023

2023 Derry Area Historical Society Upcoming Events

Board Meetings are the 3rd Monday of each month 6:30 PM @ the Fulton House

**Interested in helping YOUR historical society? Come to a board meeting!*

For the latest news and information check our website: www.derryhistory.org and "LIKE" us on Facebook!

Monday Nov. 20th Election of Officers 6:30 PM @ the Fulton House

Monday Dec 4th Christmas Community Sing-a-long 6:30 PM @ Old Salem Church

Friday Dec. 8th Old Fashioned Fulton House Christmas Gathering 6:30 PM @ the Fulton House

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Christmas; the word itself invokes nostalgic thoughts of both familial and cultural traditions. Christmas customs have grown and evolved throughout the years. Christmas as we know it began to take shape around the 1820's. Around that time, German immigrants brought their most beloved tradition to the Americas: the Christmas tree. While the Christmas tree was decorated with fruit and candles, a key factor was that it was hung upside down from the ceiling in an effort to safely house the decorations. Germans can also be thanked for the gingerbread house, made popular by the Grimm Brothers in their story "Hansel and Gretel".



Gift giving was originally looked at as a materialistic, but throughout the 19th century, the economy became such that gifts became the standard practice. Around this same time period, Saint Nick made his first appearance in the 1823 short story "A visit from Saint Nicholas", By Clement Moore. Children began to hang their stockings so that they might receive trinkets from Saint Nicholas. Saint Nicholas earned the beloved name Santa by the 1850's, when Thomas Nast perfected the image of santa through drawings. Santa became the beacon of gift giving, complete with stories of his workshop, as well as his wife and the elves. Santa's flying sleigh was actually dreamed up by Washington Irving, in his book of short stories, "The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon".

Although Christmas is a joyful time of year, ghost stories at Christmas were commonplace in the early 1800's, mostly due to Yule, which was the celebration of the winter solstice. This was the shortest day of the year and was reminiscent of fundamental elements of winter, death and rebirth. The most well known ghost story around Christmas is still quite popular today: Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol", Christmas Fare of beef, goose, turkey and ham became the focal point of the Christmas meal for very practical reasons: December was the best time to take animals to slaughter. Families used the resources available to them when choosing their Christmas meats and trimmings. Mincemeat pies were a way of stretching the meat supply, and eggnog was available to farm families because eggs and milk were a main staple.

Christmas; The joy and love we share among family and friends has always been and will always be the most wonderful time of the year!

Rachel Ruffing

2023 Pomeroy Award Recipients Effie Nicodem and JoAnne Vicini



Left: President Missy Snyder &
Effie Nicodem

Right: President Missy Snyder &
JoAnne Vicini



The 1952 History of Derry Township AVAILABLE AT ALL OF OUR EVENTS!

First published in 1952, then reprinted over 20 years ago, this gem has been reproduced and is now available at the Fulton House for **ONLY \$5.00 each!** In paperback, this classic is filled with brief stories and the origins of each small village around the Derry Area community. Read about Ridgeview Park, Torrance, New Alex, Oaklawn, Mechesneytown, Loyalhanna, Cooperstown, Cloverhill, Cokeville, Brenizer, Snyderstown, Gray Station, Bradenville, Bear Cave, as well as early tales, churches, schools, and so much more!

Stop by one of our events at the Fulton House and get yours!

The History of Derry Township makes a great gift idea for anyone with Derry roots!

Support local history – Become a part of our efforts to preserve the past to educate the future.

Ask a friend to join YOUR local historical society TODAY!

We cannot do it without you!



2023 Pomeroy Award Winners Announced!

The John Pomeroy Award was created by your DAHS in 2007 and is named for one of our area's earliest and notable settlers who played a crucial role in our area's development. It is awarded by the historical society board after careful consideration is given to all who have been annually nominated. The candidates who have been chosen are awarded due to their contributions toward the fulfillment of the Derry Area Historical Society mission "to encourage the appreciation and preservation of local history, genealogy, and historic architecture."

On Monday, October 16th, the Derry Area Historical Society presented the award to two local residents. JoAnne Vicini of Derry Boro and Effie Nicodem of Derry Twp. Both were recognized during the award ceremony, which was held at the Fulton House in New Derry.

Effie Nicodem and her late husband Thomas Nicodem originally had a plan to remodel and move into the house. Effie noted that she loved the old log cabin aesthetic and had dreams of celebrating Christmas in the quaint, cozy house. But Robert Reintgen had other plans. He approached the Nicodems since the society wanted to use the house as its headquarters, in addition to restoring it to its original 1817 appearance, making it the museum that it is today. The Nicodems came to the conclusion that the DAHS needed it more than she did. She then sold the property and donated the 1817 historic Fulton House to the Derry Area Historical Society in 1997, two years after the society was founded.

Moreover, it was Effie who built the stone foundation that sits beneath the Fulton House's barn. The barn, as it sits today, was reconstructed by Bob Reintgen, William L. Snyder II and a team of volunteer students from both Derry & Latrobe starting in 2005. The barn was trucked in from a farm outside of Mount Pleasant and erected on the foundation that the Nicodems had originally intended for a woodworking shop. Thanks to Effie's handiwork and the selflessness of her and her husband, the Derry Historical Society has been thriving on the Fulton House property for the last twenty-six years.

Award recipient JoAnne Vicini is one of the historical society's founding members. She was born in the Indiana Co. borough of Cherry Tree, home of the 'Cherry Tree Monument' which stands at the junction of Indiana, Clearfield, and Cambria Counties. She did not consider herself a "town girl," but lived about two miles out on a rural route. JoAnne moved to Derry in 1961 when her late husband Bob Vicini got a job in Derry working at the former Industrial Ceramics Inc. Plant.

In addition to being a teacher at Derry for thirty-one years, she has worked to educate and preserve our local history in many ways over the years. She became a member shortly after her retirement in 1996. JoAnne has been a docent at both the Fulton House and the Atlantic #40 One Room School House and an active member of DAHS's hospitality committee where her creativity and friendly disposition was an asset in making Fulton House events a success. JoAnne is still very active in the Historical Society, contributing wherever she is needed. At the ceremony, she read a poem to the board and audience which she has allowed to be published in this newsletter.

Both JoAnne and Effie have taken roles in their contributions to the Derry Area Historical Society in their own ways. The ultimate purpose of the John Pomeroy Award is not only recognizing such contributions but to say "Thank you" to those who make the mission of the historical society possible. We hope to encourage others to, like JoAnne and Effie, go above and beyond the call of duty toward historic preservation!

By Peter Wood

What a wonderful subject is history

There's no limit to its expanse

From early man to man on the moon

Things that were planned and many more by chance.

Happenings that occurred many centuries ago

Or events that have happened in our life.

No matter long ago or even today

Most were made with days and years of strife.

As a member of this Derry historical society

We must all remember that it is our goal

To investigate, celebrate and preserve these things

So everyone's duty is to please, please take a role.

JoAnne Vicini

Innkeepers are our lifeblood

Join them in helping us preserve the past

Derry Area Historical Society

P. O. Box 64

New Derry, PA 15671

724 – 694 – 8808

www.derryhistory.org

Dear Community member

You may already be aware of the importance of the Innkeepers program to the Derry Area Historical Society, when this program was started 16 years ago, it saved our group. The Innkeepers program pays for all of our utilities and general operating expenses, while our dues and other donations are used to provide our research services and pay for our special events throughout the year. Without the Innkeepers we could not pay the bills and without paying the bills, the historical society would cease to exist.

While this vital program has kept our organization alive, it is not enough. Yes, we always desperately need donations, but what we need more than ever are volunteers. The amount of work to keep any organization afloat is tremendous, our load has long been carried by a small handful of people

Continuing or becoming a first time Innkeeper shows others that you value the legacy left to us by our ancestors. It says that you understand that the lessons of the past can be a valuable tool for the future. It says that you feel it is important to preserve the past to educate the future. Please consider becoming an Innkeeper by returning the sign-up slip (below) and your \$175 donation as soon as possible. As always, because we are a non-profit organization, your donation is tax-deductible.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Missy Snyder

President Derry Area Historical Society

2024 Innkeepers Appeal

_____ values the past and wants to help “keep the lights on” at the Fulton House as a 2024 Innkeeper. Enclosed is my check for \$175 made out to the Derry Area Historical Society.

Name _____

Amt Enclosed \$ _____

Street address: _____

Email address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

*Please consider helping to keep historic preservation alive in our area by becoming an Innkeeper!



The Wine Blight of the 1800s

President Missy Snyder

Wine is a very popular and common drink these days, but there was once a time when a pesky little bug caused devastation to vineyards across Europe. An aphid called phylloxera, made its way through Europe in the late 19th century. It caused grape vines to shrivel up and not be able to produce fruit. Wine production in France fell 72% in 14 years and many individually owned vineyards went out of business.



In Italy, the hardest struck regions were Sicily and Calabria. However this little bug didn't spread as quickly through Italy for a couple reasons. One was due to the regional growing habits of grapevines through trees, intermingling crops with other species. The second reason was because of the higher volcanic minerals, which the phylloxera didn't survive well in.

America came to the rescue to save the vineyards and wine! European varieties of grapes were grafted onto American grape rootstock. Phylloxera is native to the Americas, so the grape vines became immune to the effects of the bug. By 1990, about 85 percent of all the world's vineyards were grafted onto American root stocks that are resistant to phylloxera.

With help from some scientists and governments the grape vines were saved by the American grape vine rootstock! Keeping the wine growing and flowing for years to come. So next time you raise a glass of your favorite vintage, remember to thank America!

Visit our Derry Area Historical Society Genealogical Research Center at the Fulton House!

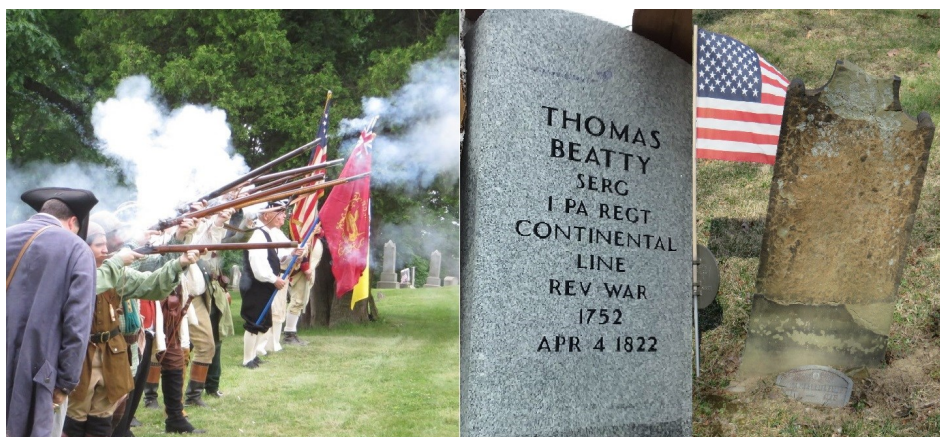
Our collective roots have made us what we are. Stop by and discover yours or better yet, step up to volunteer to help others discover theirs while lending a hand by becoming a regular volunteer at our research center.

Please consider volunteering for regular help at our research center and by doing so, you will be saving a valuable part of our society! If you do NOT volunteer on a regular basis at D.A.H.S. because you fear the you may not 'know enough' history to help, nothing could be further from the truth. There are a vast array of volunteerism opportunities at our historical society that will fit your abilities perfectly.

Be not intimidated by what you do not know, but rather be driven by your desire to know. Come, offer your help, learn new things, make new friends! Find out how you can help our society grow.

To inquire about volunteerism opportunities, email us at: derryareahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

This coming Veterans Day Weekend November 11th & 12th, 2023, the Derry Area Historical Society will be hosting a way to show your respect for our first American heroes, our local Revolutionary War Veterans.



Many of those Derry Township veterans are resting in the Old Salem Community Church Cemetery, located just three miles north of New Derry on Route 982

Our “Adopt a Revolutionary Hero” program is a project to raise funds for and install permanent granite grave markers for the 30 American Revolutionary War Veterans interned at the Old Salem Community Church Cemetery. A vast number of the original grave markers are quickly falling victim to our harsh climate and the rampage of time, with many that are no longer decipherable. With our preservationist mission in mind, it was of great concern that the last remaining monuments to our local first American heroes may fade forever.

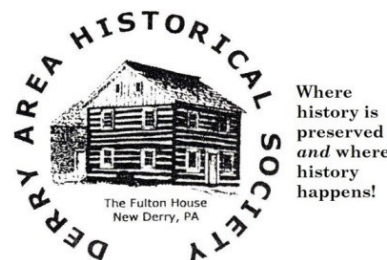
Since beginning the “Adopt a Revolutionary Hero” program in 2017, we have had enough donations to purchase 15 of the 30 granite markers, some of those will be installed on this coming Veterans Day weekend. In addition, Dr. Bryan Hanks, PhD and his students from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh will be performing a ground penetrating radar survey on November 11th and 12th, 2023 at Old Salem to help determine where unmarked graves may be. In addition, the Derry Area Historical Society plans to install the remaining granite headstones and we are inviting individual community members and groups who may be interested in helping with this noble cause to join us. Work hours will be 10 am to about 4 pm Saturday, and possibly Sunday, depending on how much gets accomplished Saturday.

We welcome any and all community members to come help with installing the stones. No experience or expertise necessary. There is a way for everyone of any age to help. For questions or more information, call the Fulton House at 724-694-8808 and leave a message or email “derryareahistoricalociety@gmail.com”

“The Innkeepers Program”.

The driving force that keeps our society in operation financially is our Innkeepers Program

To learn more, turn back to page 4!



Old Salem Community Church Cemetery: Honoring our FIRST American Heroes

Our FIRST veterans gave us all a gift that none of us can replace, freedom.

Don't we all owe them our gratitude? Shouldn't we do what we can to ensure that they are NEVER forgotten?

Help us preserve their honor by making a donation. No matter the amount, every bit helps! Each step down the road brings us closer to our destination. The total cost of permanently marking each of the thirty Revolutionary War veterans final resting places at the Old Salem Community Church Cemetery will end up being in excess of \$25,000.00 and we are halfway toward meeting that goal! We can't stop now!

Join us by making a donation or watching for our "Activity Day" announcements at

<http://www.derryhistory.org>

or on our Facebook page and come on out and lend a hand.

Our ancestors were there for us, now it's our turn to be there for them.

Each stone costs the Society roughly \$850.00 and will guarantee that our first American hero's names will live on into the future.

VISIT 'www.derryhistory.org' To learn more!

What is Derry 250?

Read on or stop by Thursday Nov. 16th at Germano Hall in Derry beginning at 6:30 pm to find out!
(learn more on page 16)

Join us!



Some of the stones that will be installed at our next Old Salem Activity Day event Nov. 11th

JOIN US!!

FORT LIGONIER DAYS PARADE **FIRST PLACE!**

The Derry Area Historical Society took first place in the Fort Ligonier Days parade float competition. Their “good old days” float featured an old-fashioned outhouse, hand-built by historical society members, Chris & Judy Johnston & pioneer-style clothing hanging on an old-fashioned clothesline with dolly clothespins. Costumed historical society members reenacted hand-washing clothes while playing wash boards, spoons, & moonshine jugs. The whimsical scene was one that could be plucked out of the late 18th century through mid-20th century. The use of dolly clothespins dates to the early 1800’s. Beating clothes with a paddle was replaced by the washboard invented in 1833 by Stephen Rust.



The float was a collaborative effort from our members young and old. Participating in the prize-winning float were historical society members, Rebecca & Lidia Gamble, Missy & Payton Snyder, Judy Johnston, Emily Patrick, Donna Showalter, Denise & Peter Wood, Tim Trybus, & John Kerin. Participants were good sports despite spending the day in near-constant rain storms.

This is the second year in a row that the Derry

Historical Society has walked away from the parade a winner. Last year we received a third place award. Both prize-winning floats were the brain child of the extremely creative & talented Rebecca Gamble and her fourteen-year-old daughter Lidia. The Gambles, who joined the society around 2021, have been a very valuable assets to our Historical Society!

By Denise Frisko Wood



John Kerin

We can't wait to see what they come up with next year!



Missy Snyder & Donna Showalter

The History of Laundry

Rebecca Gamble

Recently I did some research for the Fort Ligonier Parade float. Our theme was based on washing clothes, and I found the topic quite interesting! The first reference to washing clothes was from the Sumerians around 2,800BC. Initially, laundry was done by slapping clothes against rocks in the rivers. A sort of soap was made from an herb called gillyflower, ash, wood or grains.

The ancient Egyptians prided themselves in cleanliness. Hieroglyphs depicted slaves stomping clothing in tanks containing water and grain. Meanwhile, the Greeks and Romans enjoyed communal bath houses where they similarly stomped their clothes in lime ash or urine. Not until the second century there was mention of a soap made of ash, animal fat and lime.

During medieval times people believed plagues and other epidemics were due to contact with water. As a result, people avoided the water, washing clothes and themselves very rarely.

In the 17th century people began to pay more attention to cleanliness. The Spanish and Italians started to produce soap made of algae and olive oil. The clothes were beat and raked across a Valcha, the first washboard. While in England they used a grooved wash bat.

In the United States a metal fluted washboard was patented by Stephen Rust in 1833. The zinc grooved boards were produced in Manilus, NY. They were manufactured from the mid 1800's thru the mid nineteen century. Some updated versions sported a rubber coating. Variations over the years included glass or terra cotta.

Inventors since 1767 have been working to perfect a machine for washing laundry. Versions that involved paddles, rods and rotating gears were slow to catch on. Modern day machines evolved and were powered by small machines after 1894. To further promote the sell and development of these machines, the concept of washing powder was introduced in 1907.

The first fully automatic washing machine was made in Czechoslovakia by the Roma company in 1957. Over the last 60 years advancements include liquid laundry detergent in 1960 and biologically activated enzyme detergent in the 1970's.

In spite of all the advancements in laundry over the years, I still am waiting for the machine that will fold and put the clothes away!



DAHS Board Member Emily Patrick

Derry Area Historical Society

P.O. Box 64, New Derry, PA 15671

724-694-8808 www.derryhistory.org

Email: derryareahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Membership Application

The mission of the Derry Area Historical Society is to encourage the appreciation and preservation of local history, genealogy and historic architecture while building strong partnerships with other organizations and groups that will strengthen our community.

Membership levels

<u>Annual</u>		<u>Lifetime</u>
Business \$25	Individual \$10	Individual \$100
Student \$5	Couple \$15	Couple \$150

Join us in preserving the past for the future by mailing this completed application, together with your membership dues at the level you have selected, to the above address. A membership card will be mailed to you with a letter of welcome. Annual membership dues, based on the calendar year are payable by February 1st. New annual members joining the DAHS after September 1st will have their dues covered for the following calendar year.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL _____ AMT. INCLUDED _____

OPTIONAL (but VERY MUCH needed!) - Indicate below the activities of the DAHS you are willing to volunteer time for:

<input type="checkbox"/> Research Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Officer or Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Presence
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Docent at Fulton House	<input type="checkbox"/> Building, Grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Programming
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Webpage assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotions	<input type="checkbox"/> Craftsperson	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

(please return to the D.A.H.S. address listed at the top of the form)

Revised, 5/2019

Already a member? PLEASE share this form with someone who should be!

Our efforts to get the Fulton House News out to our members and the surrounding community is one of our Society’s largest regular expenditures. You can help ease that burden by sponsoring your Derry Area Historical Society!

My business is interested in donating to assist with the publication of the next “Fulton House News” by becoming a: *(please circle one)*

Platinum Sponsor (\$300) - Advertisement in the “Fulton House News” for BOTH bi-annual editions. Name/logo in any and all event programs as well as event signage featured at Fulton House. Promotions on Derry Area Historical Society social media (Facebook/Instagram).

Gold Sponsor (\$200) - Advertisement in the “Fulton House News” for either Spring or Fall editions (donor’s choice; please circle your choice above). Name/logo in any and all event programs as well as event signage featured at Fulton House events. Promotions on Derry Area Historical Society social media (Facebook/Instagram).

Silver Sponsor (\$50+) - Name/logo in any and all event programs as well as event signage featured at Fulton House events. Promotions on Derry Area Historical Society social media (Facebook/Instagram).

To inquire about how you can assist your Derry Area Historical Society email us at:

derryareahistoricalsociety@gmail.com



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**\*Please support the businesses who support your**

**DERRY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY!**



# The Atlatl

by Lori Majorsky

The atlatl is an Aztec word that means Spear thrower. Basically it is a stick throwing a stick, an ancient hunting weapon that was once used to kill the woolly mammoth. It is still used in New Guinea and by the Aboriginal people in Australia for hunting. The Atlatl is also used in a modern sport by The World Atlatl Association.



I was introduced to the atlatl in 1998 while working at McDonald's. A customer at the restaurant asked me if my son and I would be interested in going to an Atlatl demonstration. He handed me a paper with info about atlatl demonstrations with his name (Chuck Butorajac) and address (Ligonier). He knew that I liked to hunt because he heard me tell stories about taking my son, Doug, hunting. I was kind of hesitant because he had a beard and mustache on only one side of his face, and was clean shaven on the other side. After he left the restaurant, I asked a customer (that I knew pretty well) that had been talking to the half bearded man, "what's up with the half beard thing because I'm might be interested in going to this demonstration on the paper". He just said "oh, you mean Chuck. He's ok, and he is a good person." I did ask Doug if he would be interested in going, and he said yes, even though I told him about the guy's face. The next day I saw the half bearded man, and told him my son, his friend from school and I will come for a demonstration. We went later that day, and Doug was so good at throwing, that he was hitting the target right away. Me and the other kid didn't do so well. Our throws went left, right and over the target. Chuck was so impressed with Doug's throwing ability that he invited us to an event he was having later that year. Doug and I went to the throw, and he threw better than some of the guys that had been throwing for years. Everyone was very impressed with Doug. I didn't do well but, the group of people were very encouraging. They were members of the World Atlatl Association (WAA). We were asked to become members, so we joined as a family which includes my husband Andy, myself, our daughter Lisa, and our son Doug.



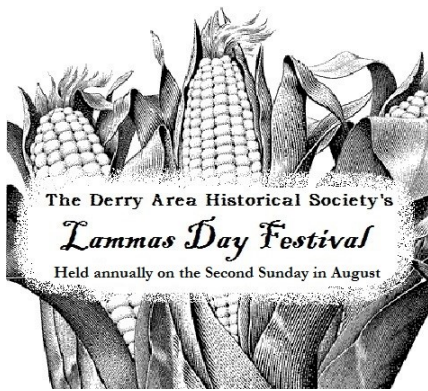
Our first full year of competition as a family was 1999. We traveled to many states to attend Atlatl events. The best score possible is 100 with 10 X's. Doug threw a score of 92XX which was the Youth World record at the time, and it was good enough to take second place in the Men's division. His World record held up for 13 years.

In 2001 I finally mastered the sport, and Doug was now in the Men's division. I was the Women's World Champ and Doug was the Men's World Champ. The next year Doug became a Marine so he didn't get to compete anymore, and Lisa went to LaRoche College, so just Andy and I continued to compete. I was able to become the Women's World Champ again in 2008, 2009, 2015, and 2019.



During the years we were asked to do Atlatl demonstrations for different organizations, such as Boy Scout Troops, Women's groups, Latrobe Elementary School, Grave Creek Mound Archeological Complex, Brothersvalley School, IUP Archeology Day, the Loyalhanna Masonic Lodge in Latrobe, PA, and most recently The Lammas Day Event for the Derry Area Historical Society!





## Lammas Day!

An ancient Europe festival that is so old it predates Christianity, originally Lammas Day marked the beginning of the harvest season, the ripening of first fruits, sort of a reverse Thanksgiving, if you will. It was traditionally a time of community gatherings, market festivals, horse races and reunions with distant family and friends. Among the Irish it was a favored time for handfastings - trial marriages that would generally last a year and a day, with the option of ending the contract before the new year, or later formalizing it as a more permanent marriage.

On mainland Europe and in Ireland many people continue to celebrate the holiday with bonfires and dancing. The Christian church established the ritual of blessing the fields on this day as well as blessing the first harvest.

At the Derry Area Historical Society, we revived the festival to take place at our restored 1817 stage-coach stop, the Fulton House and have established the second Sunday of August as Lammas Day for the past 17 years. The original celebrations centered on some sort of grain, so we've made the Derry Area Lammas Day as a corn festival. The idea is to have something fun and different!

**The 17th Annual Lammas Day Festival was held on Sunday August 13th, 2023,** and as



always, this year's gathering was a special one! We were very fortunate to have many visitors, spinners, Fulton House tours, and of course delicious corn! One of our younger visitors, Lucius Altman, who was visiting with his father Adam and brother Seamus. When I asked him if he had had any corn yet, replied "I don't like corn!" To which I responded, "Lucius, Lammas Day corn is so delicious, if you held it on your forehead, your tongue would slap your brains out just to get to it! Not long after this declaration, I heard Lucius behind me saying; "It's not working", after I turned around, I saw Lucius holding the corn on his forehead with his tongue dangling!

Each and every Lammas Day is an excellent opportunity to gather with friends, share a delicious feast, and learn about our mutual past at the Fulton House!

*William L. Snyder II*

(don't forget to mark your calendar for the second Sunday in August next year! You won't want to miss it!)





# Haunted History Comes Alive!

By Peter Wood

**“History can be boring, but not if a ghost tells it.”** That was a quote from author, paranormal investigator and historian Ronald L. Murphy Jr., who led our first-ever haunted history walk of downtown Derry this fall.

Any nonprofit organization, such as our historical society, is always looking for new and exciting ways to branch out into uncharted territory. My wife and I were attending the Annual Kecksburg UFO Festival this summer with the idea of possibly finding a speaker to come and give a presentation at our Fulton House for Halloween. We talked to author Stan Gordon, who let us know that another author that had a booth at the festival was local to Derry and had extensive knowledge of that area as well. That led us to Ronald Murphy who, when approached by us about speaking at our historical society, was absolutely ecstatic about wanting to give a presentation about all the various stories about our area.

We invited him to attend one of our board meetings, where he presented to us all of his possible ideas for how we could attract a new audience. Not only was he eager to give a presentation, but he also wanted to lead a haunted history walk through the town of Derry and talk about the legends and lore. He told us that “every good ghost story teaches us a lesson or sheds light on a forgotten aspect of our past. Derry's past, and much of the past of Westmoreland County is in danger of being forgotten... If people are entertained by haunted happenings, great! Those stories will survive a little longer with their retelling.”

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, at the same time that the historical society was hosting our Halloween Bonfire, Ronald Murphy led three tours during the evening and night that started at the Gazebo at Mossback Park and were guided throughout downtown Derry after giving a presentation at the Fulton House. The first tour was family friendly, the second tour got a little bit scarier, and the third tour was, as Ronald Murphy put it, “not for the faint of heart” and involved more intense stories related to Derry’s past.

A few of us board members of the society got to experience firsthand Ronald Murphy’s last tour of the night, and it was worth the price of admission alone. He spoke about various tales in great detail about downtown Derry, one of them including the tragic horse and buggy accident that occurred over Derry Bridge in 1898.

Around 60 people attended the tours. Attendees seemed to have nothing but great things to say about Ronald Murphy’s telling of the legends of this town and, moreover, even got to learn something that they never knew about. As Mr. Murphy put it, “History is more than just dates and events. It is about ordinary people doing ordinary things and that shaped the world into what is now.”



# Bites & Brews

By Denise Frisko- Wood



On Saturday, September 9th, over a hundred people visited the grounds of the Derry Area Historical Society's Fulton House in New Derry. The event was one of the largest gatherings in the group's history. The "Innkeeper's Bites & Brews" was a sold-out event in honor of the society's regular donors, nicknamed "innkeepers."

Food and drinks were donated by local restaurants including Ianni's, Rosemary's, Derry Subway, Latrobe Jaffres, Four Seasons Brewery, Marinos, The Olde Spitfire Grille, Own Brook Winery, Roundhouse Pizza, Latrobe Dino's, Aroma Italiano, Blairsville Sheetz on Market Street, & Turner's Dairy. Many other local businesses & individuals donated basket raffle items. Several community members even lent use of their property to be used as extra parking for the day, with parking assistance provided by members of Derry Volunteer Fire Company. West Central Equipment lent a Gator UTV to transport guests to & from parking lots.



Guests filled their plates with the large variety of food & enjoyed live music on the lawn. Musical acts included the band, Bits & Pieces, made up of Judy Johnston, Karen Lihan, & Tim Trybus; a duet act with Dave Kindl & Laurel Thomas, & solo acts by Andrea Schnider & Missy Snyder.

William Snyder II gave a presentation inside the Fulton House on the local frontier forts while John Kerin gave tours in historic attire. The event offered something for everyone. Friends & neighbors chatted & spent time together, making for a fun afternoon for all.







# Derry 250

Since we are one of the largest and most important townships in Westmoreland County and the anniversary of the founding of Derry Township is approaching, there are many among us who feel that we have a great opportunity before us to not only commemorate the event, but to utilize the anniversary as a way of uniting and growing the region for a very special purpose.

Derry Township was established and organized by the Court of Quarter Sessions at the April term of court at Hannastown in 1775. 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the township.

We invite the local residents, businesses, churches and other non profit organizations throughout the borough and township to join us!

Our initial meeting held on August 17th, 2023 at Germano Hall in Derry was very productive with some excellent ideas brought forth.

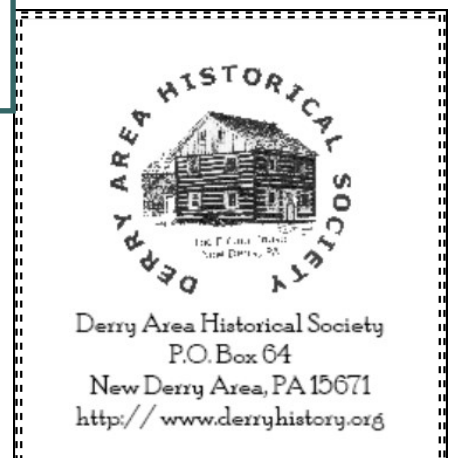
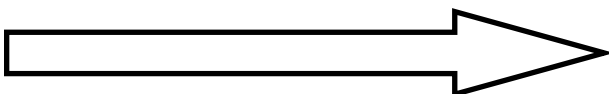
At our second meeting, also held at Germano Hall on October 19th brought about some fresh ideas and enthusiasm. At this meeting many ideas were discussed, among them being this questionnaire to help foster involvement, ideas, and cooperation toward a mutual goal of celebrating our 250th anniversary in a positive and productive manner.

The sole purpose in the creation of this idea was to not only promote our community, but also to revitalize and reenergize it in the post pandemic world. This is not a contest to outdo anyone else. It is not intended to create divisions, but rather to bring us all together with one common goal; to contribute to a positive celebration of not only those who currently live, work, and learn here, but also to honor those in the past to helped mold and build our community, as well as to get us all more community minded as the world once was.

***Please use the questionnaire on the next page to have your voice heard concerning the best way to make "Derry 250" an enjoyable positive family event that will be long remembered and perhaps even become the birth of an annual 'Founders Day' weekend as a way to bring our community together and to celebrate those who came before us!***

The next Derry 250 meeting will be held  
on Thursday Nov. 16th at Germano Hall in Derry  
beginning at 6:30 pm!  
**Join us!**

Please return your  
completed questionnaire (on the  
next page) to the D.A.H.S.:





# Derry 250 Questionnaire

PAGE 17

Please use the questionnaire below to have your voice heard concerning the best way to make this an enjoyable positive family event that will be long remembered and perhaps even become the birth of an annual 'Founders Day' weekend as a way to bring our community together and to celebrate those who came before us!

All local individuals and groups are encouraged to become part of the discussion and planning.

Please list your name, related organization, and contact information below

◆ NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

We are trying to build a local community calendar of existing events. If you are associated with a local organization's regularly occurring event, please describe it here:

*Please list your organizations current regular events, with dates, times, and how often your event occurs*

One suggestion is to have an **"Ethnic Food Festival"** and all interested groups be randomly assigned a week or weekend that their particular organization could utilize to feature an ethnic food fundraiser of their choice, which would be advertised and promoted by the DERRY 250 CELEBRATION. **The justification of this idea is that it would be a continual draw to our community throughout the summer of 2025 as a part of our celebration.** The 'random assignment' of weeks or weekends would be a method of being fair to all interested groups.

*Would your organization be interested in playing a part in this event?*

\_\_\_ Yes! This sounds exciting!  
\_\_\_ Maybe!  
\_\_\_ No interest.

So far at our meetings, many wonderful ideas were brought forth as a way to make our commemoration special. Below are the various suggestions, but like all great ideas, what is needed most is people to bring those ideas to reality!

*Please indicate which committee that you are willing to help with:*

|                                |                            |                                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ Parade committee           | ___ Time capsule committee | ___ Historical home tour comm. |
| ___ Ethnic food festival comm. | ___ Commemorative video    | ___ Artistic Mural comm.       |
| ___ Reenactment organization   | ___ Media relations        | ___ Fashions of the Past comm. |
| ___ Commemorative booklet      | ___ Craft festival comm.   | ___ Other (please explain)     |
| ___ Children's costume contest | ___ Music committee        | _____                          |

Through the diligence of volunteers at the Fulton House we have been able to maintain this important relic not only as a monument to the past that houses our local historical archives but also a headquarters for our group and a family friendly instructional tool to educate the future with our various events throughout the year.

We desperately need to energize local community members to keep our local history alive. Donations are always needed, but more than money, we need you. Nothing our society does happens in a void. We are desperately seeking willing volunteers with a variety of skills. We are in dire need of help in many areas, but specifically collections archivist, financial secretary, web design and maintenance, acquisitions, promotions, community outreach, musical events director, genealogist, the list goes on and on. No matter the skill, we need you! Without out you, this cultural icon may fade away more quickly than you may think!

## Derry Area Historical Society

We touch the future by preserving the past Join us

Visit us at: [www.derryhistory.org](http://www.derryhistory.org)



Derry Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 64  
New Derry Area, PA 15671  
<http://www.derryhistory.org>

The next **Derry 250** meeting will be held on Thursday Nov. 16th at Germano Hall in Derry beginning at 6:30 pm!

**Join us!**