

CUMBERLAND County History

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Volume Nineteen
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CUMBERLAND COUNTY HISTORY

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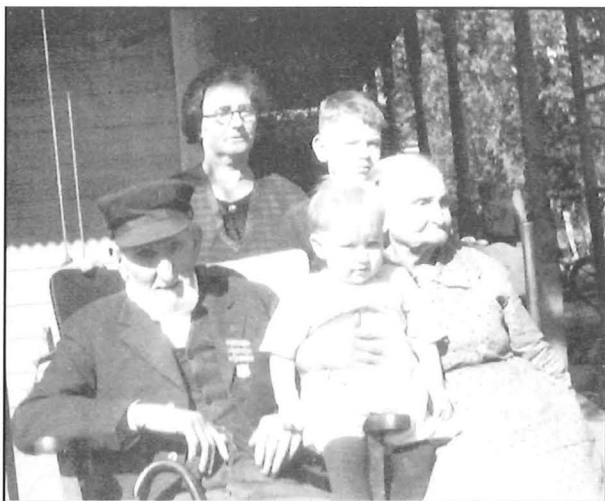
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Front row: James G. Weakley, Don Osborne, Katie Himes Weakley

Back row: Hattie Weakley Reilly, Peter Reilly

Family photograph taken in October 1922, Coffeyville, Kansas just days before the death of JG Weakley. *Courtesy of the author.*

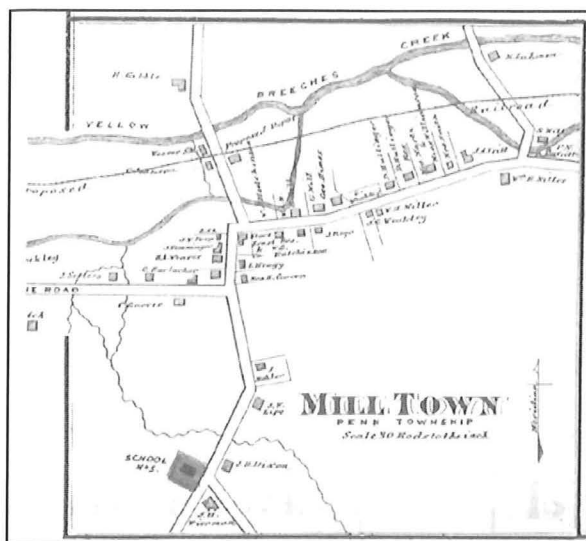
Weakley Family Black Sheep:

Why James Geddes Weakley Was Disowned

B.J. Alderman

In May of 1837, James and Eliza Geddes Weakley welcomed into their home in Mill Town (Huntsdale) their youngest son, James Geddes (JG) Weakley. The grandson of Samuel Weakley, JG was also the great grandson of the patriarch of “one of the most prominent families in the western part of the county,” James Weakley.¹ What act or acts did JG Weakley, a seemingly honorable man, commit in later life that caused him to be erased from the family tree?²

JG apprenticed at an early age to a carpenter, a trade he followed until the opening of the Civil War. He can be found in the 1860 census residing with James Coyle, a master carpenter, Coyle’s sizeable family, and James Brown, another carpenter, in South Middleton Township. President Lincoln called for



volunteers to defend the Union after the attack on Fort Sumter, and JG responded by joining the 9th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry for three months. Eight days after his honorable discharge, JG joined the 3rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry as a corporal and fought with Company H. Serving under Captain William E. Miller, JG made sergeant on June 13, 1863, just prior to the battle of Gettysburg.³

In reports of the gallantry of Captain Miller at Gettysburg, for which Miller was awarded the Medal of Honor, JG is mentioned by name, albeit by his former rank of corporal.⁴ He returned home in 1864, honorably discharged.

On January 10, 1865, JG married Catherine Ann (Kate) Himes, the daughter of George and Catherine Linnebaugh Himes. Kate's father had purchased the Weakley mills in 1855, an event which brought these two "upright and honest" families together.⁵

JG and Kate had three children by 1870, two girls and a boy. According to the US Census for 1870, JG resided with his young family in Penn Township. By June 1871, JG resided in Kansas as he "had been appointed general agent for the lands offered for sale by the Kansas Pacific Railroad."⁶ Kate and the children remained in Mill Town, living in their home across the road from her parents until they migrated west with the first Pennsylvania Colony in April of 1872 to join JG.⁷

After a couple of rather rough attempts at holding viable elections in the fledgling Russell County, Kansas, the voters ushered



Captain William Miller, JG Weakley's Superior Officer
CCHS Photo Archives

JG into the office of sheriff in 1875. The family, now blessed with a fourth child, moved from the Center Township homestead to Russell City. The following year JG was also elected Russell City marshal and divided his time between the duties of both city and county offices. His skills as a carpenter were in demand as he improved the condition of both jails as well as remodeled the Records Clerk's office in the Court House.

JG proved successful in his re-election attempts, including the year in which all of the Republicans were voted from office except JG and the county surveyor. He relinquished his concurrent duties as city marshal in 1878 as he took on a new business opportunity with Kate's brother-in-law, George Smyser. Their business, known as Smyser, Weakley and Company, brought in agricultural equipment and horses to sell to new emigrants in the booming county. However, by the end of 1878, the partnership had been dissolved, for unknown reasons.

In January 1879, the editor of the new newspaper in Russell, *The Independent*, noted in his publication that he had met Sheriff Weakley at the courthouse.⁸ A month later, according to Weakley family tradition, JG departed for the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) to retrieve an outlaw wanted for trial in Russell County. He never returned, nor was he seen again for forty years. It appears that this story has merit because of the notices in *The Independent* during the spring of that year that stated the Sheriff's family and friends were dismayed at his continued absence without any word from him. It appears that JG saw the first notice because *The Independent* reported that he had written to Kate to say that he would be home within the week. But when JG did not return, another notice of distress was put in *The Independent*, this time unanswered.

On April 29, 1879, the Russell County Board of Commissioners met with the county attorney "to consider the action of the present sheriff in absenting himself unlawfully from Russell County and failing to turn over moneys belonging to the County, the same being delinquent tax collections."⁹ Upon advice of counsel, they decided to do nothing until JG was caught and convicted.

As time went by without JG's apprehension, the commissioners were left with no option but to lay the case before the governor of Kansas as required by law in order to fill a vacated sheriff's office between elections. In a June 1879, letter to the Russell County Commissioners, Governor John P. St. John stated:

"I do not know whether it is of any interest to you to know the present whereabouts of James Weakley. If it is however, I am inclined to the opinion that a search for him in the southern portion of Comanche County [in southwest KS] would result in finding him. I had heard of his leaving your county together with the circumstances connected therewith, and while in Comanche County the first of this month, I inadvertently mentioned the

matter to some ‘cowboys’ who said that they had seen Weakley, that he was down there and had a woman with him. I think they also stated he had a span of horses and spring wagon.”¹⁰

While the entire county must have been buzzing about the disappearance of their sheriff, the newspapers in the county were oddly silent on the matter. The lone exception was *The Independent* in which appeared a brief notice in the June 7, 1879, issue: “The Board of County Commissioners have declared the OFFICE of SHERIFF vacant. Alas, Poor Weakley, weakly indeed you have acted.”

Kate and her family, which had grown to six children ranging in ages from one to 14 years, left Russell City in May 1879 for their homestead eleven miles to the southeast.¹¹ The scope of JG’s misadventures continued to broaden, as it came to light that he had also absconded with fines collected on behalf of the Federal District Court, escalating his misdeeds to the realm of a federal offence. In 1878, three gentlemen of the county had bonded Sheriff Weakley in the amount of \$5,000. During the Autumn Session 1879 District Court, suit was brought against JG Weakley along with the three men who had bonded him.¹² The plaintiff sued for satisfaction of the court fines turned over to JG but not delivered to the court or the plaintiff.

George Hendershot, seeking election to the temporarily filled office of sheriff, was one of those named as co-defendants in the case. An editorial appeared in *The Record* on October 30, 1879, that shed some light on the situation:

“Outside of the well-known fact that Mr. Hendershot is an excellent executive officer, and that he is one of the most popular men in the county, there is another consideration that is making him scores of votes, viz: the fact that he lost by the last sheriff – Mr. Weakly [sic] – nearly \$1,000 while in the discharge of official duties. For this reason a great many argue that, if there is anything in the sheriff’s office, Mr. Hendershot is justly entitled to it.”¹³

If one of the trio who put up JG’s bond in 1878 was required to pay almost \$1,000 to cover the collected and then stolen fines, it stands to reason that each of the three men lost equally. The nearly \$3,000 stolen from the District Court plus at least one of the county’s horses ridden by JG when he left the county plus an unknown amount of delinquent tax money identified the crimes of James Geddes Weakley as substantial indeed. Add to that the alleged case of adultery and the very real abandonment of his wife and six children, and one begins to appreciate to what degree that JG besmirched the good name of Weakley.

JG changed his name to James G. Taylor and made his way to Lead City, Dakota Territory, a mining camp a few miles south of notorious Deadwood.¹⁴ In the 1880 census he was listed as living with Edward Kiler, an engineer from Ohio, in that place. JG was once again working as a carpenter.

On November 15, 1882, Kate Himes Weakley petitioned for a divorce from JG on the grounds of abandonment, and it was granted. Around that same time, JG migrated south to Sioux City, Iowa, where he continued to reside and work as a carpenter until 1914. Ten years earlier, at the age of 67, JG applied for his Civil War pension. His file at the National Archives is substantial due to the difficulty that he had in proving that the man who claimed to be James G. Taylor was the same man who fought in the Civil War as James G. Weakley. In 1906, Weakley sent a current picture of himself to Captain William E. Miller who confirmed in an affidavit that it was a picture of the same man he'd known as Sergeant Jim Weakley albeit at an advanced age. This was confirmed by Stewart Foreman, another soldier in Company H and resident of Carlisle.

The earliest known documentation of JG's family knowing his whereabouts is 1914. At that time, JG was hospitalized, and members of his fraternal lodge petitioned the courts for a guardianship to be established. In those records it is noted that JG's youngest son had been contacted and recommended appointment of a guardian in Iowa.¹⁵ The Iowa Court declared JG a spendthrift and appointed one of the lodge members as his legal guardian. JG was discharged from the hospital and placed in the Old Soldiers' Home in Marshalltown. The guardianship continued for five years.

There was no record of his family having visited him during his stay in the Home. However, there was a record of Kate Weakley having applied for residency at the Home in December 1919, a marriage certificate stating that JG and Kate had re-married in 1921, and her admission papers to the Home shortly thereafter. In JG's pension records, a letter pertaining to Kate's pursuit of a Widow's Pension stated that "aside from a sentiment and affection that had not died, [reasons for the remarriage] were that the said soldier [JG] was in very poor health, and he was very insistent and wrote frequently for the affiant to come to Marshalltown where she would be able to look after his wants in the way that was most suitable and pleasing to him. She thought it was best that they remarry in order that she might be able to all the better take care of him while he was in poor health."¹⁶ The couple lived together for a year in a cottage at the Home. On October 28, 1922, while JG and Kate were visiting their eldest daughter in Coffeyville, Kansas, JG died at the age of 85. He is buried in the Coffeyville cemetery.¹⁷ The obituary written for the Coffeyville paper was repeated the following month in *The Record* of Russell, Kansas, with the following addition: "James G. Weakley

was formerly a resident of Russell. He was elected sheriff in 1875, but moved away before the completion of his term. He will be remembered by a few of the old timers.” To say the least.

Endnotes

- 1 “We’re Not in the Cumberland Valley Any More, Toto! The Great Migration to Kansas in the ‘70s,” Dr. Clarke W. Garrett, Winter 1998 issue Cumberland County History, (86).
- 2 Ibid. In footnote 5, Garrett says “For some reason James G. Weakley is not listed in the several Weakley family genealogies.” (94).
- 3 Taken from the June Return of Capt Wm. E. Miller, Co H of the Third Regiment of PA Cavalry, signed in the field June 30, 1863, courtesy Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.
- 4 *History of the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry, Sixtieth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers in the American Civil War 1861-1865*, Wm. Brook-Rowle et al., 1905.
- 5 From article on J. H. Himes in the *Biographical Annals of Cumberland County* (610)
- 6 Ibid. (86)
- 7 From the *Atlas of Cumberland County Pennsylvania from actual surveys by and under the direction of F. W. Beers*, 1872, courtesy of the MidContinent Library, Independence, MO.
- 8 *The Independent*, January-June 1879, courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.
- 9 Russell County Board of Commissioners Journal, April 29, 1879, courtesy of Russell County Court House Archives.
- 10 From the letter of Kansas Governor John P. St. John to County Commissioner Henry Senft of Russell County, June 25, 1879, courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.
- 11 The children of James Geddes Weakley and Catherine Anne Himes Weakley were Henrietta (Hattie), Martha (Mattie), William Edgar, John Geddes, Emma Jane, and James Edward.
- 12 Thomas Roberts vs. James G Weakley et al, Russell District Court, Oct. 1879.
- 13 *The Record*, newspaper of Russell County, Kansas, 10/30/1879, courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.
- 14 Weakley’s alias discovered in the files of The Old Soldier’s Home archives, Marshalltown, Iowa.
- 15 *E.F. Pfaff vs. James G. Weakley*, Iowa District Court, 1914. “One of the sons of the defendant has been communicated with, and he has expressed the wish that some member of the lodge hereinbefore mentioned be appointed as the guardian of this defendant.” Affidavit

also mentions that the son lived in Cameron, MO (which identified him to this author as James E. Weakley, who was but one year old when his father abandoned the family).

- 16 Affidavit by Kate Weakley to The Department of The Interior, Bureau of Pensions re: Widow Division, Catherine Weakley, James G. Taylor alias James G. Weakley, H-3 Pa. Cav., sworn to 4/3/1923.
- 17 Kate Himes Weakley died at the home of her second daughter in 1929 and is buried in Burlingame, Kansas.



Photograph of Wilhelm Schimmel
CCHS Photo archives

Wilhelm Schimmel: Cumberland County “Image Maker” (1817-1890)

Karl H. Pass

Wilhelm Schimmel, regarded today as one of America’s most famous folk carvers, was a colorful itinerant who roamed throughout the Cumberland Valley region of Pennsylvania in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He likely immigrated to America from the Hesse-Darmstadt region of Germany shortly after the American Civil War.¹

Little is known about exactly when and why he came to Cumberland County, although he was a non-naturalized citizen in the county by 1869. On Friday, May 7, 1869, the German “image maker,” as he was described in the *Carlisle American Volunteer*, walked into the lumberyard office of Delancey & Shrom in the borough of Carlisle. Likely intoxicated and entirely covered in mud, he proceeded to dismantle furniture while overturning the office’s burning stove.² Upon being forced to leave the office, he began throwing stones at the owners and at the building until three men with stones of their own subdued him. Soon afterward, Officer Sanno took Schimmel to Fort Thompson.³ At an August 23rd court appearance, Schimmel entered a guilty plea to assault and battery, and a one-year jail sentence followed.⁴ This incident was not the sole occasion Wilhelm Schimmel found himself arrested and jailed because of rowdy behavior. An 1883 *Carlisle Sentinel* report offers details of various such incidents. It reads, “For years he has migrated among the farmers, working occasionally, but more generally selling in towns carvings of dogs and birds, toothpicks and other

novelties made by his own hand.” The article goes on to outline his somewhat “charmed life,” having survived countless fights, railroad accidents, and encounters with the law.⁵

Schimmel was a figure of many colorful legends that passed down through generations along with many of his carvings. We know of him by several reported names — Wilhelm, William, Heinrich, Henry, Jacob, and John. One common reference used by many in the period was that of “Old Schimmel.” Over the course of at least 21 years, from 1869 to 1890, the year he died, Schimmel stayed with families mostly of German descent. He moved from farm to farm, seldom wandering far outside the county seat of Carlisle. He would carve mostly animals, many for the children of his hosts, in exchange for room and board. He established bonds with various families, visiting them repeatedly. Many of them lived along the winding Conodoguinet Creek.

One such German family was the Hensels of Newburg, Hopewell Township, Cumberland County. They would often house tramps in a summer-kitchen loft coined the “bummer room” in exchange for day labor.⁶ In his *History of Cumberland and Adams County*, Warner Beers states, “Many poor people of Hopewell have cause to remember their (the Hensels’) many acts of kindness.”⁷ According to Alice Hensel, on several occasions during the 1880s Schimmel stayed in their “bummer room” for several days to a week at a time.⁸

Charles Hoffman traveled by buggy practicing medicine in Hopewell Township in the 1870s and 1880s. According to Hoffman’s grandson, Schimmel often used the elder Hoffman for transportation to the Hensel farm.⁹

As described in a letter written by Melva Hensel in 1971, during one stay at their farm Schimmel carved a spread-wing eagle for her father, John Hensel, Jr. One night while teasing young John, then age four or five, Schimmel said to him, “If you kiss the hired girl, I will make you something.” The young boy proceeded to climb onto the girl’s lap and gave her a kiss. Schimmel kept his promise by carving the eagle for him. John Hensel, Jr. was born in 1879, which establishes the creation date of the eagle around 1884. The letter goes on to state that Schimmel would make a fire in the summer kitchen fireplace and sleep in the “bummer room” loft on a chaff tick and cornhusk pillow.¹⁰



Hensel family summer kitchen; on the second floor is the small loft known as the “Bummer Room.”

Photograph taken by the author

Another family who frequently housed Schimmel was the Greiders of West Pennsborough Township. The Greiders operated a gristmill along what is now Creek Road, north of Plainfield. Schimmel stayed the longest with the Greiders, likely in their washhouse near the mill and covered bridge that bore the family name.¹¹ As boys, Elmer Sipe and his brother Peter spent time at Greider's Bridge watching Schimmel carve. Elmer's son, Charles, remembers his father, who passed away in 1949, and his uncle Peter, who died in 1960, telling him how they sat by the creek while Schimmel carved under the covered bridge. Peter remembered that Schimmel would mumble to himself in a tongue that neither of the boys could understand. Charles thought that Schimmel often stored his carvings in a support beam under the bridge.¹²

It was on Tuesday evening, July 15, 1873, in West Pennsborough Township, perhaps by Greider's bridge, that Schimmel attacked a local boy, Stuart McCoy, and his mother, Margaret. A warrant issued the following day by the justice of the peace recounts the incident according to Margaret McCoy's oath. The warrant reads, "William Shimmel [sic] a German who is in the habit of staying about the premises of David Greider of West Pennsborough Township struck her son (Stuart McCoy) with his fist & raised a stick to strike her & abused her." Two Commonwealth witnesses in the case were Elizabeth Greider and Peter Bloser.¹³ The former was likely a relative of David Greider; the latter, a relative of Samuel Bloser, who owned a carpentry shop in nearby Frankford Township. Bloser's shop was a source of Schimmel's pine carving blocks.¹⁴ Schimmel was taken to jail and held in default of one hundred dollars bail.

Six years later on Friday afternoon, March 7, 1879, at a public sale in Frankford Township, Schimmel, who was likely intoxicated, attacked a man by the name of Nickey with an axe. Nickey retaliated by hitting him on the head with a stone. It was initially reported that Schimmel had died from the injury, but soon after it was declared in several papers that he would in fact recover.¹⁵

Three years after this near-fatal attack, Schimmel had another narrow escape from death's door. The incident occurred in the early evening of May 22, 1882, aboard the 5:00 p.m. Cumberland Valley Rail Road (C.V.R.R.) westbound train from Carlisle. He was presumably heading to the Greiders because he paid his fare to Greason, the nearest stop to his creekside mill haunt. As the whistle



Photograph of Greider's Mill along Creek Road, today known as Heishman's Mill.

Photograph taken by author

sounded for Greason, although still a mile from the station house and with the train going full speed, Schimmel walked out of the train car and fell to the ground. Conductor McCormick was alerted as the train pulled up to the station, and they promptly reversed course to where Schimmel lay. Train hands noticed a bottle next to him and placed him in the baggage car to be taken to Newville, where they had telegraphed ahead for medical attention. When the 6:30 p.m. eastbound train arrived, he was taken back to Carlisle to the Cumberland County Almshouse, just east of town.^{16 17} One newspaper report following the accident stated that “Old Schimmel, who has always been a hanger-on at the jail and the county house was going up the valley on the train when in the vicinity of Kerrsville, being intoxicated deliberately walked out of the car and off the steps.”¹⁸ After being admitted to the Almshouse, it was thought that Schimmel would lose his right eye, but that turned out not to be the case. Over one month of care for “head and eye injuries” was needed, and he was discharged on June 25. Almshouse register papers recorded his age at the time as 65, thus establishing his birth date at 1817.¹⁹ The well-known photograph of Schimmel with a disfigured right eye must have been taken after May 22, 1882, since his appearance in the photograph is likely the result of that train accident.

In addition, it is likely that the accident resulted in Schimmel needing the aid of a cane. According to a newspaper account, on Wednesday evening, August 1, 1883, Schimmel became engaged in a fight with another German at the C.V.R.R. depot in Carlisle. As the aggressor, Schimmel reportedly swore in German and *shook his cane* at the man. Eventually the fight came to blows until “old age and

whiskey weakened the effect of them.” It was reported that neither man could speak English. Both men were headed west, getting off at Greason where Schimmel was no doubt headed to the Greiders. This is the first account stating that Schimmel could not speak English and that he used a cane.²⁰

On Wednesday, February 14, 1883, less than six months before the fight at the C.V.R.R. depot, Schimmel entered the Mansion House on High Street in the borough of Carlisle.²¹ After settling into a chair and falling asleep, Schimmel was awakened by the proprietor and asked to leave. This apparently provoked a fury in “Old Schimmel,” for he launched a spirited attack upon those around him. Following the heated skirmish he walked along North Hanover Street



Postcard image of the Greason C.V.R.R.

CCHS Photo Archives

and was found at a tavern named Mr. Graham's, only to be confronted by two officers who forcefully took him to Fort Eyster to be confined for a period of ten days.²² By 1883 "Old Schimmel" was such a notorious local figure that advertisements were made capitalizing on his reputation. W.H.H. McClintock of Carlisle used Schimmel's name in his print ads for Welch's liniment. The merchant implied that Schimmel had beaten a man so badly that the victim needed a bottle of the medicine to relieve the pain of his injuries.²³

Intemperance took a considerable toll on the old German. Early in the summer of 1890, under great duress, he was carted to the County Almshouse on the back of a butcher wagon owned by Becky Hoffress's father.²⁴ His death came after a two-month stay in the poorhouse on Sunday, August 3, 1890, at the reported age of 73.²⁵ Three days later he was buried in an unmarked grave in the potters' field.²⁶ The cause of death was listed as "cancer of the stomach."²⁷

His obituary was published in numerous local papers, an uncommon practice for a tramp. The fact that coverage was given to his passing gives credibility to Schimmel's notoriety. One such obituary reads, "Old Schimmel, the German who for many years tramped through this and adjoining counties, making his headquarters in jails and almshouses, died at the almshouse on Sunday. His only occupation was carving heads of animals out of soft pine wood. These he would sell for a few pennies each. He was apparently a man of very surly disposition."²⁸ Another notice states, "He was of a surly, savage disposition, and was very dangerous when enraged."²⁹ It would be another thirty years before the art world would give much attention to the carvings that are now Schimmel's legacy. In the 1920s, during a period coined "the flowering of American Folk Art," Schimmel's carvings were sought after by collectors who appreciated their naïve artistic merits. They found their way into the collections of such well-known folk art enthusiasts as Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Titus Geesey, Elie Nadelman, and Maxim Karolik. One private collection in the 1920s consisted of 135 Schimmel carvings.

The list of museums with significant Schimmel holdings today include the Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Shelburne Museum, the New York Historical Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Cumberland County Historical Society.

An event that helped to establish the marketplace for Schimmel carvings occurred September 26 and 27, 1927, at the Graeffenburg Inn in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Thirty-seven years after Schimmel's death, a two-day sale was held which included ten of his carvings. This is believed to have been the first time that Schimmel's work was widely advertised and publicly sold, and it generated a great deal of attention. It was in this period that prominent local

dealers such as Mrs. Maude A. Miller, the Penrose sisters, and the Blacksmiths canvassed the Cumberland Valley in an effort to acquire carvings. The vast majority of the pieces collected at this time came from first or second- generation owners who received their carvings directly from Schimmel. One of the dealers, Mrs. Miller of Dillsburg, began selling Schimmels to New York City dealer Edith Gregor Halpert, a well-known agent for Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, among others.³⁰ The first major exhibition of Schimmel's work, along with that of



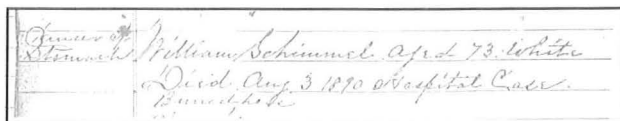
Photograph of the Cumberland
County Almshouse
CCHS Photo Archives

Aaron Mountz, was held at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center in Colonial Williamsburg, September 4 through October 31, 1965. Showcasing eighty-three Schimmel and nine Mountz carvings, the exhibit introduced these carvers to a wide audience. Today, Schimmel's work is highly recognized and revered folk art.

Schimmel's main body of work was comprised of various bird and animal figures, notably his dramatic eagles. His other bird and animal forms included roosters, dogs,

squirrels and parrots. To a lesser degree he carved lions and tigers, and single examples of a Schimmel horse and a dragon are also known. Several carvings of a soldier exist, which are possibly self-representational figures since they do resemble Schimmel's facial appearance, although it is not known whether he ever served military duty.

Apart from these single forms, Schimmel carved several significant composite pieces. There are two known versions of the Garden of Eden complete with Adam and Eve, fig tree, apple and snake, all surrounded by a picket fence. A third is known to have been made, but has not survived.³¹ It has been said that Schimmel also carved a miniature crucifixion scene.³²

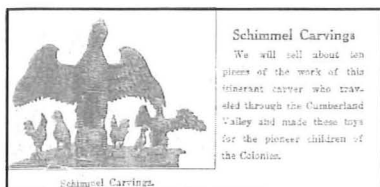


Cumberland County Almshouse register book
Courtesy of the CCHS

His Adam and Eve carvings were reminiscent of Biblical scenes carved for centuries in Europe. Some of the other forms were possibly derivative of chalkware, which was in turn influenced by English Staffordshire figures.³⁵ In

particular, the poses of Schimmel's roosters, poodles and squirrels are reminiscent of those more refined models.

An intriguing carving of a circus band has been attributed to Schimmel. The piece consists of a three-sided box with a platform across the open front. It contains seven figures inside and three standing on the band stage platform. Turning a crank located on the side of the box enables each figure to play his instrument. The box appears to be a borax laundry soap crate of the late



1927 auction sale bill

Courtesy of private collection

nineteenth century. The circus band is thought to have been made by Schimmel during one of his stays in the Cumberland County Almshouse. He reportedly carved it for a laundrywoman employed at the home. The woman gave it to Mr. Guy Rupp of Mechanicsburg when he was a boy in 1895.

In 1976, after over 70 years in the family home, it was donated to the Cumberland County Historical Society. This could be Schimmel's last and possibly most unique creation.³³ The attribution is questioned because it is stylistically different and compositionally more intricate than Schimmel's other known work.

An often-repeated form was that of the eagle. Of his many types of carvings, the eagle is the form for which Schimmel is most widely known. Dr. Milton Flower thought Schimmel's eagles displayed a Hapsburgian influence reflecting European eagles, rather than the American bald eagle. Schimmel's usual saw-tooth crosshatched carving, dovetailed wing construction, and overall crude execution can be compared to toy styles from Germany of the period.³⁴

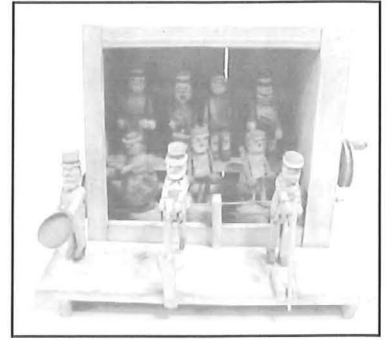
Carved from pine, as was his other work, Schimmel eagles usually possess diamond-shaped crosshatching on the chest body, wings, and legs. They were first coated with a layer of gesso and then polychrome-painted. They are predominately colored red, black, yellow, and green. His painting as well as his carving was done with a crude, quick hand. A spontaneity and naïve quality characterizes his work. They varied widely in size, ranging from pocket size to wingspans of over two feet.

The Hensel's spread-wing eagle mentioned previously has a wingspan of 22 inches and a height of 13 inches. With a forward stretching, slightly elongated head and neck, only the top comb, legs, and the backs of the wings have crosshatching patterns. Between the legs is a small round drill hole indicating where a hand drill was used to remove excess wood to create an open cavity between the legs and tail. Several other large eagles possess the evident hand drill hole between the legs. The Hensel eagle has characteristic four crosshatched talons on each foot and has wings dovetailed into the side of the chest body.

Originally painted, it has been stripped to the bare wood.

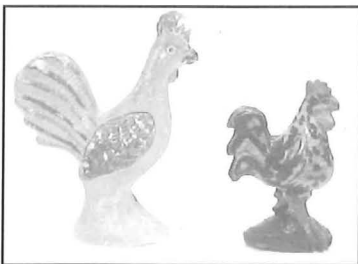
Nearly a hundred examples of Schimmel eagles survive today. Given that eagles were done in great numbers, Schimmel must have been fond of the form. Of his likely output of 1,000-1,200 carvings, probably 300-400 exist today.

Only a small handful of attributed carvings contain complete family histories directing back to Schimmel himself. Provenance is of critical importance in assigning attribution since there are no known pieces signed by him. Schimmel carved casually to support his drinking and tramp lifestyle. His signature meant little to him or to the people who received his carvings. Given his reputation in the area, most people knew that the polychrome toy figures were by his hand even though they were never signed. Today, the proliferation of high quality copies, whether meant to deceive or not, makes attribution difficult.



Circus Band attributed to Schimmel
Courtesy of the CCHS

Schimmel's use of the eagle form mirrored local customs along with the social and political attitudes of the post-Civil War period. The eagle was a popular decorative motif, having been regarded as a patriotic symbol since its nomination as the national bird following the American Revolution. The display of a carved eagle on a storefront or in a schoolyard represented the patriotic fervor of the time. In the 1875 Plainfield *Register*, it was reported that a local man "has added the finishing stroke to his portico by placing a large eagle, one of Schimmel's manufacture on the roof."³⁶ Today, an eagle by York County Schimmel copyist David Ludwig is mounted on the side of the former Greider's Mill, the old Schimmel stomping ground.



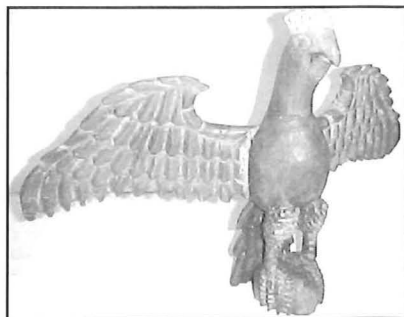
Chalk rooster alongside
Schimmel rooster
Courtesy of the CCHS

Cloyd Brehm remembers "a Schimmel" on the schoolyard flagpole in the 1930s when he attended the Plainfield schoolhouse west of Carlisle.³⁷ This was probably an eagle by Mike Baer, a Schimmel copyist who reportedly had a large eagle mounted on top of a flagpole at the schoolhouse in the early 1900s.³⁸ In all likelihood a real Schimmel eagle stood atop the pole originally and was later replaced by the Baer eagle.

Harry Bricker of Plainfield had a Schimmel eagle with a six foot wingspan mounted on the

inside wall of his blacksmith shop. It was destroyed in a fire.³⁹ A similar eagle mortality story concerns two young boys in Blossville who took their family's Schimmel eagle out for target practice. Unfortunately, they were fine marksmen.⁴⁰

The artistic context of these carvings has changed since they were created over a hundred years ago. What were simple gifts or objects of barter are now regarded as premier examples of American folk art. The carver's purpose, influences, methods, lack of formal training, and naiveté have combined to place Schimmel's work in the category of true folk art. The high visual appeal of his work, filled with a robust spontaneity and character, along with his personal story have placed Wilhelm Schimmel "The Image Maker," along with Cumberland County, on the folk art map.



Schimmel eagle from Hensel family
Courtesy of the CCHS

Endnotes

- 1 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), p.6.
- 2 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *American Volunteer*, 13 May 1869, Microfilm, 4.
- 3 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *Carlisle Herald*, 14 May 1869, Microfilm, 3.
- 4 Cumberland County August Quarter Session Docket Papers, 1869. Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 5 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 15 February 1883, Microfilm, 4.
- 6 Melva Hensel Fyler, letter, 1971, Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 7 Warner Beers, *History of Cumberland County & Adams County*, 1886, p.487.
- 8 Alice Hensel, telephone interview by author, 12 October 2001.
- 9 Dave Burd, telephone interview by author, 22 October 2001.
- 10 Melva Hensel Fyler, letter, 1971, Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 11 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), p. 8.
- 12 Charles Sipe, telephone interview by author, 6 April 2002.
- 13 Cumberland County Arrest Warrant, 16 July 1873. Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 14 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), p. 8.
- 15 Shippensburg (Pennsylvania) *Shippensburg News*, 8 March 1879, Microfilm.
- 16 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *Carlisle Herald*, 25 May 1882, Microfilm.
- 17 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *American Volunteer*, 24 May 1882, Microfilm.
- 18 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 24 May 1882, Microfilm.

- 19 Cumberland County Almshouse Register, 1882, pg 18-19. Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 20 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 2 August 1883, Microfilm, 4.
- 21 This establishment was later called the James Wilson Hotel and following World War I, the Hotel Argonne. Today, the structure is known as the James Wilson Safe Harbor.
- 22 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 14 February 1883, Microfilm.
- 23 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 17 February 1883, Microfilm.
- 24 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), p. 3.
- 25 Cumberland County Almshouse Register, 1890, pg. 26. Cumberland County Historical Society.
- 26 Today the almshouse is known as the Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.
- 27 Milton Flower, "Schimmel The Woodcarver," *The Magazine Antiques* October (1943): 166.
- 28 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *The Sentinel*, 7 August 1890, Microfilm.
- 29 Carlisle (Pennsylvania) *Carlisle Herald*, 7 August 1890, Microfilm.
- 30 Pierson Miller, interview by author, 11 July 2002.
- 31 One Schimmel Garden of Eden belongs to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The other is in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum collection. The AARFAM example is more primitive and smaller in size than the one at the PMA.
- 32 Milton E. Flower, "Schimmel the Woodcarver," *Early American Life*, February 1977. 281-282.
- 33 "Schimmel carving puts area on map," *Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Sentinel*, 4 February 1978. Microfilm.
- 34 Milton Flower, "Schimmel The Woodcarver," *The Magazine Antiques* October (1943): 165.
- 35 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), 5,10.
- 36 Newville (Pennsylvania) *Star of the Valley*, 6 July 1875, Microfilm.
- 37 Cloyd Brehm, interview by author, 6 November 2001.
- 38 Milton Flower, *Three Cumberland County Wood Carvers* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1986), 10.
- 39 Charles Sipe, telephone interview by author, 6 April 2002.
- 40 Fred Shriner, interview by author, 18 October 2001.

Noble Purposes and Labors of Love: Women Answering the Call on the Home Front

Christine Ameduri

When the women of the Civic Club of Carlisle purchased a new Studebaker Street Sprinkler in May 1903 to keep the streets of Carlisle clean, the club was not only embarking on new territory but also continuing an already impressive, albeit short, civic track record.

Prior to this purchase in 1903, the club had already formed a League of Good Citizenship in the borough schools, joined the Federation of Women's Clubs, awarded prizes for tree planting in the community, wrote a column that appeared weekly in a local newspaper, and helped to orchestrate an agreement between the water company and borough council to lay pipe in alleys to homes with no plumbing.

Historians today recognize the significance of such women's clubs. "During the progressive



Studebaker Street Sprinkler purchased by the
Civic Club in 1903.

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Club Women's Creed.

I believe in club life for women.
I believe that woman should utilize her opportunities
for the strenuous life.

I believe that woman has no right to undertake any
work whatsoever outside of the home, along the lines of
philanthropy, church, temperance or club life, that does
not emanate from the home and in its final and best re-
sults return to the home. Hence, most always for the
center, but not the finish, of woman's life.

I believe in the results of the club members doing
the work and not the criticizing, instead of the re-
sults.

I believe in individual responsibility for every inter-
est of the club, mutual sympathy and appreciation of re-
sults.

I believe no woman has a right to accept a place on
any committee unless she serves faithfully, promptly, in-
dependently, and is willing to stand by the results of her in-
dividual action.

I believe that women should have a moral responsi-
bility regarding financial matters in the prompt payment
of dues and policies, and a comprehension that as no
other phase of life can be carried on without money,
neither can the extended club life.

I believe in the value of a salary, and that thievery
of time on the part of one fair member from those in
willing to contribute.

I believe the character and good name of each in-
dividual member of the club should be as carefully guarded
by all other members as those of the family, and that the
use of dishonorable political methods in club life for
women will be the death knell of pure, assembly organiza-
tion.

I believe the golden rule for club women should be
taught unhesitatingly, regardless of what others do or
say.

MRS. ROBERT BURDETTE.

Women's Creed.

CCHS Photo Archives

era," writes Nancy Woloch in her book, *Women and the American Experience*, "the ranks of women's organizations exploded. Women were enemies of vice, filth, corruption, ugliness, ignorance, and exploitation. Their special concerns were anything involving children, home, family, education, health, hygiene, food, sanitation, and other women."¹

Woloch notes what one progressive wrote in a university bulletin in 1915: "A women's place is in the home. But to-day would she serve the home, she must go beyond the home."²

A passage from the Club Women's Creed printed in the Civic Club of Carlisle's 1904-1905 yearbook clearly illustrates that club women in Cumberland County were acting on this sentiment nearly a decade earlier. In part, the creed reads: "I believe

that woman has no right to undertake any work whatsoever outside of the home, along the lines of philanthropy, church, temperance or club life, that does not emanate from the home and in its final and best results return to the home. Home must always be the center, but not the limit of woman's life."³

Encouraging women to win a place outside of the home by using domestic credentials was, ironically, an extension of the Victorian doctrine known as the cult of domesticity, which was related to the ideology of separate spheres for women and men. According to this ideology, a woman's natural sphere was her home, where it was her duty to use her natural, inherent qualities of nurturing, compassion, piety and understanding to maintain and provide for the comfort and happiness of her family. Also believed to possess a special gift for religion and morality, woman was deemed man's moral superior and was responsible for the spiritual welfare of her husband and children. The cult of domesticity surely kept many women at home, but a woman could also use that same ideology to justify acting "domestically" outside the home, and this is what we see in these women's clubs.

According to Karen J. Blair in her book, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*, Jane Cunningham Croly was the single most important figure in the women's club movement. When this pioneering female journalist was denied admittance to a men's-only reception for Charles Dickens sponsored by the New York Press Club in 1868, she responded by founding Sorosis, a women's club, and later, the Women's Press Club of New York City in 1889. She insisted that "Women's work in the home should neither be scorned nor abandoned; it should be elevated. And women should use their domestically nurturing talents to influence the world outside the home."⁴

Jane Addams, founder of Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago, put a slightly different twist on the argument by stating in 1910 that, "If a woman would keep on with her old business of caring for her house and rearing her children she will have to have some conscience in regard to public affairs lying quite outside of her immediate household. The individual conscience and devotion are no longer effective...."⁵ Thus, women learned to navigate men's public and political sphere by using their "domestic credentials" to justify their activity outside of the home.

This same kind of progressive thinking inspired women in Cumberland County as early as 1828 when the Female Benevolent Society of Carlisle was formed for the "relief of the poor." Between 1898 and 1929 at least a half dozen organizations or divisions within already established organizations in Cumberland County were created by and run exclusively by women based on this philosophy. These organizations are classic examples of how women extended their traditional home boundaries to include any problems or issues that they thought might ultimately affect life within the home sphere.

The formation of some of the Cumberland County women's organizations was a direct response to World War I and World War II. However, even though their goals were different from those of their sisters in benevolent organizations, their approach was the same: to publicly capitalize on women's domestic skills and traits so as not to appear threatening to the men's public sphere.

The women of Cumberland County were not too busy feeding and clothing the disadvantaged or promoting good hygiene and safe play areas for children to quickly respond to the call for help in aiding war activities. By directly or indirectly aiding the boys on the front, they were responding to an even earlier notion of the cult of domesticity – Republican Motherhood.

According to author William Barney, "The republican mother was charged with the politically vital task of rearing virtuous, liberty-loving sons who would willingly sacrifice themselves for the good of the new nation. The family itself was not threatened by this extension of the mother's influence. Rather, through the patriotism and intelligence of the republican mother, herself still a second-class citizen, it would become a nursery for the future guardians of the republic."⁶

Because as mothers they had taught their sons to love their country enough to want to defend it against any aggression or threat, it was now their obligation to support them in the wartime attitudes and beliefs that they had fostered and encouraged earlier.

From its auspicious beginning, the American Red Cross, dedicated to preventing and alleviating human suffering, has been looked upon as humanity's surrogate mother. Whenever and wherever human misery manifested itself, the "Greatest Mother in the World," a term the organization adopted proudly and used heavily, was ready to provide relief. It offered aid to those unfortunate enough to meet with nature's wrath and fury, it ministered to the wounded and dying on countless battlefields, and it nursed the sick and infirmed too weak to help themselves.

The Red Cross's heavy dependence on women to volunteer and its expectations about the kind of work they could and should do, was influenced by the ideology of separate spheres. Between World War I and World War II, the organization easily accommodated itself to this 19th century ideology. This mindset was totally reflected in the organization from its beginning, not only by men, but also by women themselves. One such woman was Mabel Boardman, a volunteer and well-educated socialite who is remembered for recognizing the need for the Red Cross to be managed better at the national level. In 1904, she realized her goal by helping to bring continuity of service and centralized leadership.

Her book, *Under the Red Cross Flag – At Home and Abroad*, first published in 1905, strongly reflects the popular ideology of separate spheres. She mentions often how women were the natural choice for attaining the objectives of the

Red Cross because of their allegedly nurturing, compassionate and caring qualities:

Here and there through history are meager stories of the work of patriotic and humane women for the sick and wounded of military conflict. There will be the men temporarily and permanently crippled, who will need the aid of the lay woman. Many must be taught how again to earn their livelihood by some method suitable to the loss of eyesight, or of a leg or an arm. They will be the wives and children of the soldiers at the front who will need her assistance, and, to her tender sympathy and care must be confided the widow and orphans. The woman, be she lay or trained nurse, who is willing to do what she is best fitted to do will find no limit to the field of her usefulness.⁷

Not only did the Red Cross recognize women's supposed inherent qualities, but it also went one step further by elevating them to a saint-like status. According to Clifford Clark Jr., author of *The American Family Home, 1800-1860*, it was not unusual to refer to women as the "angels of the house," "for they were said to be the moral guardians of the family."⁸ Illustrative of this are the dozens of Red Cross campaign, roll call and wartime posters depicting women with outstretched arms, ready to embrace, protect and comfort any wretched creature that crawled to them. Magazine covers also portrayed women as possessing pious qualities. One particularly striking example of this is found on the cover of the March 1918 edition of the *American Red Cross* magazine, which depicts a woman in a nun-like habit with a halo. The organization's use of "sister" to refer to Red Cross nurses prior to 1905 also reflects the idea that women were men's spiritual and moral superiors. The styles of uniforms, complete with yard-long veils issued to women through the late 1950s, also reinforced this concept. Hence, the American Red Cross successfully encouraged the idea of separate spheres by its portrayal of women in art, literature, and costume.



Wartime Poster.

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A short history written in 1919 by Naomi L. Arnold of the Carlisle Red Cross Chapter, along with the minutes of the Mechanicsburg Red Cross Chapter, detail the kinds of work women were involved in, the capacity in which they served, how the chapter viewed women, and how the women viewed themselves.

According to Arnold, at the beginning of the war, “Carlisle, Pennsylvania did not have an organized Red Cross chapter, although a few of her citizens belonged to the National Red Cross and were subscribing members to it.”⁹ On May 1, 1917, a meeting was held at the courthouse in Carlisle, for the purpose of organizing a chapter in the borough. At this meeting it was decided that the county be divided into three chapters, Shippensburg, Carlisle, and Mechanicsburg, which had already formed its own chapter three months before when it separated from the Harrisburg Chapter. The Carlisle Chapter included the townships of Lower Mifflin, Newton, Frankford, West Pennsboro, Penn, Cooke, Dickinson, North and South Middleton, and part of Silver Spring and Monroe Townships. Twelve auxiliaries stretching from Bloersville to New Kingston were established to further organize the area. The town of Newville and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School located on what is now the U. S. Army War College grounds were established as larger branches and also reported to the Carlisle Chapter.



Red Cross workers sewing — 1945.

CCHS Photo Archives

The chapters, branches, and auxiliaries immediately established various committees to organize effectively and commence their work. Most committees that were organized by women and comprised of an all-woman volunteer force were ones that were considered to involve “women’s work”, such as knitting, sewing, hospitality and other domestic activities.

These committees produced goods and services that directly aided, comforted, and supported the soldiers. According to Arnold, between May 1917 and March 1919, the Carlisle Red Cross Chapter and its auxiliary branches made and shipped over 146,000 surgical dressings, 15,000 garments: 6,000 knitted articles, and 2,000 comfort kits. It also fed and entertained thousands of soldiers routed through Carlisle on truck trains.

An examination of the minutes of the Mechanicsburg Chapter from the same period suggests that the activities and sentiments present at the Carlisle Red

Cross Chapter were not isolated and that the ideology of separate spheres influenced many chapters. In the case of the Mechanicsburg Chapter, not only did women organize, develop, and implement such activities and committees; but they also founded the chapter itself, as is recorded in their February 1917 meeting minutes.

The growing need for Red Cross work having aroused more than ordinary interest, several of the women who are interested in charitable work here, decided that it was time to organize. Previous to this time, a number of Mechanicsburg women had been doing Red Cross work under the direction of the Harrisburg Chapter and had done excellent work. However, there was a feeling abroad here that we could do better and a larger work by having a chapter of our own and to this end a meeting of our townswomen was called by Mrs. Alice Hauck at her residence on Market St.¹⁰

The women of the Civic Club of Carlisle responded as well to the call to assist soldiers during WWI, but instead of rolling bandages, knitting socks, and feeding soldiers passing through Cumberland County, the club took a more

administrative approach. During the war years, the Club supported the goals and objectives of the Women's Peace Party, encouraged Club members to join the

Pennsylvania Women's Division for National Preparedness, and organized a Society for War Relief and affiliated it with the Emergency Aid Committee of Pennsylvania. However, even though they did not take a direct "hands-on" approach, they still operated within their sanctioned sphere as is evidenced by their minutes.

The March 7, 1916, minutes of the Club state that a letter from the Women's Peace Party was read,

telling of the object and principles of the party and asking our thoughtful consideration on this important public question. The object of the Women's Peace Party shall be to protest against the war system; to substitute love for



Truckload of Red Cross Supplies.

CCHS Photo Archives

war; to enlist all women of the United States in arousing the nations to respect the Sacredness of Human Life . . . and promote methods for attainment of that peace between nations which is based on justice; and to cooperate with women of other countries which are thinking towards the same ends. No thinking person would question the wisdom of real defense against real dangers but women, especially, should deplore the present tendency manifested throughout the country... A motion was made and passed that we endorse the principles of the Women's Peace Party.¹¹

The Club's minutes of May 2, 1916, reads:

Mrs. Mapes read a paper on the work of the Penna. Woman's Division for National Preparedness which has its headquarters in Philadelphia, and of which Mrs. G. W. Childes Drexel is Chairman. The idea is to form chapters not less than 100 members in the cities and towns of the states, whose duty it shall be to give help in times of war or calamity or great distress of any kind. This help includes the care of the families of soldiers who are giving military service. The nursing of the sick, furnishing of surgical supplies, homes and hospitals, the use of motor cars and drivers, the rendering of first aid to the injured, and general service such as the making of garments and the preparation of kits, etc.¹²

The minutes of February 6, 1917, show that again the Club was willing to work in conjunction with other organizations. After a brief summary of war relief work and the work of the Red Cross, the members "moved that our club affiliate itself with the organizations of Miss Caldwell and Miss Penrose and appoint a committee to cooperate with them." The motion passed and a committee was immediately appointed.¹³

Once again, the Club's minutes show how quickly and willingly the women of the club were ready to cooperate with other organizations for the benefit of soldier's war relief. The March 6, 1917, minutes report that Mrs. Allan Thompson reported for the Committee on War Relief, "A Society for War Relief was organized last Thursday and League affiliated with the Emergency Aid Committee of PA. The Civic Club room will be open every Thursday with a committee chairman in charge to teach workers how to make the bandages and garments required."¹⁴

Even though the Club did not participate in all activities, so as not to duplicate work, individual club members still served on boards and committees, as the April 3, 1917, minutes show that, "Mrs. Raphael Hays had already been appointed by the Council of Defense to carry on the registration of women in Cumberland County."¹⁵ In October of that year, the Cumberland County

Unit of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense was officially formed, "not to create a new organization but to co-ordinate all the different woman's organizations, that they may more effectively carry on the work outlined for them."¹⁶

During that same meeting, members decided that the club would appropriate \$25 to the War Library Fund, and "Arrangements were then made for members of the Club to present the opportunity of contributing to the Fund to the children of the city schools..."¹⁷

Later that year, on November 6, "The president announced that she had accepted the chairmanship of Women in Industry, subcommittee of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, Cumberland County Unit." The members "moved and carried that the Club stand ready to cooperate with not only the Committee of Women in Industry but also all the other committees of the Council of National Defense."¹⁸

In the subsequent war years, the women of the Civic Club also made regular monetary donations to the Red Cross, held fundraisers to raise money for the Belgian Baby campaign, and donated money to the Romanian Children's clothing fund.

During World War II, the women of the Civic Club, Red Cross, Garden Club, and other groups pitched in once again to aid the boys on the front. Once again, from their minutes, correspondence, and other materials, it is evident that the "Cult of Domesticity" heavily influenced what kind of role these women chose for themselves in participating publicly in the war effort.

Nothing is more illustrative of this sentiment than the 1943 annual report of the Carlisle Chapter of the American Red Cross, as every aspect of this ideology is clearly reflected in the greeting:

Here at home we find ourselves at the opposite end of the same responsibility which our men faced abroad. It becomes a sacred opportunity for us to hold up their arms in the midst of struggles which mean life and the pursuit of happiness for the people at home. The Carlisle Chapter of the American Red Cross is the outward expression of the love we feel for every man and woman who is now a part of the armed forces of the United States. It becomes impossible to translate these deep sentiments, these noble purposes, these labors of love, these welcome opportunities to serve, and these activities of helpfulness into facts and figures. This report is alive with human understanding and warm with those expressed affections that mold a people into a united whole under the pressure of severe stress and strain.¹⁹

For the 1942-1943 year, the Carlisle chapter and its branches fulfilled every request made by the United States government in all 17 of its departments and

was a “100% chapter” for that year.

Like their sisters before them during World War I, the women of the Carlisle Civic Club once again answered the call to assist in the war effort by working with national, state, county, and local organizations. Two Civic Club members served in the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corp, while another was appointed Women’s Activity Representative for Defense for Cumberland County by the Civilian Defender Council. And, the minutes of January 6, 1942, state, “A recommendation offering the club’s services immediately for civilian defense was adopted.”²⁰



Past Presidents of the Carlisle Civic Club.

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The Club bought thousands of dollars in defense bonds, turning the proceeds over to the Red Cross and other organizations, as well as selling such. The February 3, 1942, minutes state that, “The Finance Committee made the following recommendation with the approval of the executive committee, that the Civic Club of Carlisle purchase two one thousand dollar defense bonds at \$1,480 and one five hundred dollar defense bond at \$370.... A motion was passed accepting the recommendation.”²¹

In addition to their trademark administrative approach, the women of the club also undertook more traditional women’s activities. “Mrs. Rearick reported for the War Services Committee that the committee met in December and cut out the material for service kits. They hope to complete the making of these kits in the present month,” stated the December 29, 1942, minutes.²²

While the women of the Carlisle Red Cross, Civic Club and other Cumberland County organizations were busy raising money, serving on committees and rolling bandages, the women of the Carlisle Garden Club thought that they could best serve the war effort by making the community a more attractive and comfortable place to live.

After all, Catherine Beecher, 19th century educator, author and social reformer and proponent of the Cult of Domesticity, wrote in her woman’s advice manual *American Woman’s Home* in 1869,

CARLISLE GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM 1944-1945	
1944	
September 20—Harvest Party	Hostess—Mrs. A. L. Weaver
	Ways and Means Committee in charge
October 18—	
Speaker—Mr. A. O. Rasmussen	
Subject—“Home Beautification in Post War Era”	
	Horticulture Committee
	Flower Arrangement by Mrs. Jackson
Nov. 28—Tuesday Eve. 8 p. m.	
Lecture—Cleveland P. Grant	
	Program Committee
December 16—Ecology Christmas Mantles and	
	Flower Show Committee
1945	
January 17—	
Speaker—Mrs. James A. Kell	
Subject—“Conservation”	
	Flower Arrangement by Mrs. Thompson
February 21—“The Legends of Flowers”	
	Speaker—Mrs. Allan D. Thompson
	Flower Arrangement by Mrs. Rander
March 21—	
Guest Speaker—Mrs. Wm. C. Estellor	
Members of Story Tellers League, of Harrisburg	
	Flower Arrangement by Mrs. Lanier
April 18—Victory Gardens	
	Civic Committee in charge
	Horticulture Notes
	Flower Arrangement by Mrs. Weaver
May 16—Spring Garden Meeting	
	Home of Mrs. Jack L. Sholly

“Aesthetic element...holds a place of great significance among the influences which make home happy and attractive....”²³ So, to lift the spirits of soldier and citizen alike, these women took their domestic credentials outside the home sphere and into the garden.

Two passages from the 1942 annual report for the Carlisle Garden Club clearly reflect this sentiment, “Since one of the functions of the Carlisle Garden Club is to create beauty not only in the gardens of its members but in the community as a whole and since beauty has a definite effect upon morale it thus becomes the responsibility of such groups to increase their efforts in this respect.”²⁴



Victory Gardens in Carlisle.

CCHS Photo Archives

And, “In days such as these perhaps it should be our individual task to help others have better gardens, or – to share the beauty of our own – so that the quiet hours spent in a garden will help and strengthen those who will have much to bear.”²⁵ As the April 15, 1942, minutes note, “We were urged to keep our flower gardens for beauty’s sake and morale.”²⁶ In part, they accomplished this by donating

and trimming Christmas trees at the soldiers’ recreation room at the Carlisle Barracks, planting shrubs and plants around the Post Hospital, planting trees in the Carlisle square in recognition of the men and women who served in the war, and supplying flowers, cookies, and sandwiches for the USO.

Moving from aesthetic to practical, the club played a significant role in encouraging the planting and cultivating of Victory Gardens. They assisted with Victory Garden Fairs, sponsored lectures by horticulturists and expert gardeners from around the state, strongly encouraged the Junior Garden Club members to plant Victory Gardens and supplied them with seeds, and as noted in the April 15, 1942, minutes, encouraged them “to buy two defense bonds” and more later “if funds permitted and to carry on further defense *work* with Victory Gardens.”²⁷

What has been presented here is based on minutes, correspondence, annual reports and other materials that exist exclusively in the archives of the Cumberland County Historical Society.

These documents show how Cumberland County women during World War I and World War II were able to gracefully step out of the home sphere and into

the public sphere to address issues and problems that they thought might affect life within the home sphere.

Endnotes

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- 3 Yearbook, Papers of the Civic Club of Carlisle (hereafter referred to as CCC Papers) MG-003, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA (hereafter referred to as CCHS).
- 4 Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) p. 17.
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- 6 William L. Barney, *The Passage of the Republic: An Interdisciplinary Study of Nineteenth Century America* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1987) p. 74.
- 7 Mabel T. Boardman, *Under the Red Cross Flag at Home and Abroad* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1915) p. 23.
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- 9 Report, 28 May 1919, Papers of the Carlisle Chapter of the American Red Cross (hereafter referred to as CCARC) MG-00X, CCHS.
- 10 Minutes, 3 April 1917, Papers of the Harrisburg Chapter of the American Red Cross (hereafter referred to as HRC Papers), HSDC.
- 11 Minutes, 7 March 1916, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 12 Minutes, 2 May 1916, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 13 Minutes, 6 February 1917, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 14 Minutes, 6 March 1917, CCC Papers, CCHS.
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- 16 Pamphlet p. 28, Activities of the Cumberland County Unit of the Committee of Public Safety for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, [1917], CCHS.
- 17 Minutes, 3 April 1917, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 18 Minutes, 6 November 1917, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 19 Annual Report, 1943, CCARC Papers, CCHS.
- 20 Minutes, 6 January 1942, CCC Papers, CCHS.
- 21 Minutes, 3 February 1942, CCC Papers, CCHS.
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- 24 Annual Report, 1941-1942, Carlisle Garden Club, (hereafter referred to as CGC) CCHS.
- 25 Annual Report, 1941-1942, CGC, CCHS.
- 26 Minutes, 15 April 1942, CGC, CCHS.
- 27 Minutes, 15 April 1942, CGC, CCHS.



Vera DeWalt Hupper, founder of the
Mechanicsburg Kindergarten
Courtesy of the author

The Children's Garden: A Mechanicsburg Kindergarten

Christine Musser

I shall not call this an infant school, because I do not intend the children to be schooled, but to be allowed under the gentlest treatment to develop freely.

—Friedrick Froebel

Very little is known about the kindergarten that was once in the basement of the PNC Bank on Main Street in Mechanicsburg. Most of the people associated with it can recall only bits and pieces of its appearance and history, or have passed on, taking their memories with them. I would like to take the reader back to Mrs. Kelley's kindergarten and share what is remembered by surviving students and parents.

Kindergartens, first opened under that name in Germany in 1837, were established in the United States after mid-century, the first being in Wisconsin. By 1890 most large cities had kindergartens, and soon thereafter, they were to be found in small towns and rural areas. One of the earliest in Mechanicsburg was started by Mrs. Vera DeWalt Hupper in an upstairs room of Murphy's Five and Dime store on Main Street (now a Subway shop). Like other kindergartens, Mrs. Hupper's was a private enterprise, charged tuition, and was not part of the public school system.

In 1939 Mrs. Hupper moved her kindergarten class across Main Street to the second floor of Hauck's Hardware Store. The reason for the move is unknown—perhaps the space above Murphy's was not adequate for the growing enrollment. Hauck's Hardware Store stood where the Ritter parking lot is today. The building was five stories high and had a sunroof on the top—a rare thing in that day. (Jack Ritter believes Hauck's store may once have been the tallest building on the West Shore). Mrs. Hupper retired from teaching in 1941 and turned the school over to Marge Kelley.

Marge McCune Kelley was born on September 12, 1899, in Middle Spring, Franklin County. She taught in the Waynesboro School System for several years before marrying J. Maclay Kelley. After their marriage the Kelleys moved to Mechanicsburg where Mr. Kelley got a job teaching political science and coaching athletic teams in the high school.

When Marge Kelley took over the kindergarten from Mrs. Hupper in 1941, she moved the class to the basement of the First Bank and Trust Company (now PNC Bank). The children would enter the bank building by a staircase off Main Street between the bank and the Mechanicsburg Post Office. Classes began at nine o'clock and ran until twelve noon. The school year was the same as that of the public schools, running from September to June. Tuition was \$6 per month.

Concerned for the safety of children who had to cross Main Street to the school, Marge Kelley contacted Chief of Police Harry (Gint) Koser. He understood Mrs. Kelley's worry and so took it upon himself to guard the crossing. A burly man who stood more than six feet tall, Chief Koser wore a uniform that consisted of a long-sleeve black shirt with a silver badge pinned to his outside shirt pocket. His black pants were tucked inside black polished leather knee-high boots. Each morning and noon he stood at the corner of Main and Market Streets until the last child had made it safely across.

The pupils learned their ABCs from square alphabet blocks made of light pine. They were taught penmanship from Palmer Method manuals. Finger games consisted of counting and rhyming subject matter. At story time Mrs. Kelley read *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, *The Little Engine That Could*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and the *Tales of Beatrix Potter*. Since she did not think herself qualified to teach music, Mrs. Kelley engaged Mrs. Herman Bowser to teach that subject. Mrs. Bowser remained at the kindergarten for 16 years.

Like other kindergartens and pre-school classes, Mrs. Kelley's pupils enjoyed snack time, when, as Robert Gelwicks remembers, they had cookies and a choice of white or chocolate milk. Snack time was followed by nap time, when each child was wrapped in a blanket brought from home and lay on a mattress the teacher provided. Marge Kelley was not only a skillful and devoted teacher, but

she also loved children. When the Kelleys realized that they would have no children of their own, they adopted a boy in 1946. Richard Kelley remembers accompanying his mother to Harrisburg to update her teaching materials and to buy toys and games for the children at Western Auto Supply.

There were memorable special days in the basement of the First Bank and Trust Company. On Election Day class was cancelled because the bank basement was required for polling. Christmas was always a special time. Santa Claus visited the kindergarten and each child took his or her turn sitting on Santa's lap. There was a Christmas Pageant in which every child had a part. In the spring there was an operetta, and in June the children graduated, each boy required to wear a tie. These affairs were exciting for the children and were attended appreciatively by their parents.

Throughout her years as head of the kindergarten Mrs. Kelley accepted not only pupils who were psychologically and physically prepared, but also those who were less fortunate. She would involve all the students in the same activity no matter what their capabilities were. Her aim was always to make all children a part of the class and not be left out. Little did they know she was preparing them for the world, not just for first grade in the public school. She taught them by her words and example to be understanding and compassionate to the less fortunate.



Caption: Mechanicsburg Kindergarten class of 1946-1947. Marge Kelley upper left, Tita Eberly second row far left, Bill Neff second row second from right, Bob Gelwicks seated third from left, Dick Kelley seated seventh from left. Photo by Hunter's Studio, Mechanicsburg, *Courtesy of the author.*

The reputation of Marge Kelley's kindergarten extended beyond Mechanicsburg. Dr. Alan Kunkel's parents, for example, sent him, when four years old, daily by bus from Shiremanstown. When the state adopted regulations limiting the number of children who might attend the kindergarten at one time, Mrs. Kelley, who never wanted to turn any children away, would sometimes make special arrangements that no child was denied admission.

Mrs. Kelley retired from teaching in 1966 after 25 years and her kindergarten was taken over by Mrs. John Shook. Mrs. Kelley died on January 20, 1986.

(I would like to thank Jack Ritter, Tita Eberly, Bob Gelwicks, Barb and Bill Neff, Dorothy Berkheimer, Officer Minday Myers, Alan Kunkel, Anna Mary Weber, Jay Stoner, Steve Zimmerman, and Dick Kelley for helping to pull this story together.)

Book Review

Oliver P. Williams, *County Courthouses of Pennsylvania: A Guide*.

(Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2001) xi, 244 pp, glossary, index, illustrated; paperback, \$19.95 (ISBN 0-8117-2738-6)

This guidebook will serve researchers as well as tourists. Oliver Williams, retired professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, has compiled histories and descriptions of courthouses in all sixty-seven counties in the Commonwealth. He has arranged them admirably in alphabetical order, with photographs of each courthouse, often with additional photographs of architectural details such as cupolas or cornices. A helpful glossary of architectural terms is also illustrated with photographs of parts of Pennsylvania's courthouses.

Williams has a capacious sense of the county courthouse. He takes note of the courthouse square, often arrayed with lofty trees and humble benches, ornate fountains or monuments to military veterans. Williams also includes county prisons, in former days usually next to the courthouse. Worthy of his attention as well are statues, whether that of Benjamin Franklin atop the courthouse in Franklin County or the nude hero standing before the courthouse in Dauphin County.

Not surprisingly, given its size and complexity, much attention goes to the courthouse of Philadelphia County. While it gets some twenty pages of discussion, most counties, including Cumberland, suffice with two. Williams gives a good description of the Cumberland County courthouse of 1846; it is his primary interest when he turns to Carlisle. Oddly, Williams declares Cumberland's courthouse of 1961 "but a faint copy" of the one built in 1942 in Dauphin County, to him "a must-see for any courthouse fan."

Despite enthusiasm for the county courthouse in Harrisburg, Williams has a low opinion of the architectural firm of Lawrie and Green, designer of the newer courthouses in Cumberland and Dauphin counties. Regarding the courthouse in Indiana County, also by Lawrie and Green and a near twin to Cumberland's courthouse of 1961, Williams refers to the firm's "very generic modern government buildings...with practically no distinguishing features." He adds, "One assumes they were designing what their clients wanted." Yet, Williams has classical tastes—no drawback—and he is kind in dubbing such soulless boxes as found in Bucks County as "startlingly modern."

Quibbles over aesthetic points give way to errors of fact. Williams believes Cumberland's "old county jail is a small replica of the Castle of Carlisle," England,

a time-worn blunder easily corrected by consulting the relevant works of the late Milton Flower. Likewise, Williams adopts other folklore: “There is a surviving old stone Cumberland County courthouse in Shippensburg, the seat before Carlisle.” A tavern used for a session of county court is not a courthouse, a permanent center built for public records and judicial administration. As Williams explains, “the early county courthouse function was record keeping.”

Williams has practical advice for visitors to courthouses—“Be prepared to pass through metal detectors”—in these violent times, or rather, in these times of violence unlike in kind from other violent eras. Still, the times allow leisure for writing and travel, and with this book Williams has done historians and sightseers a fine service.

Latrobe, Pa.

Daniel J. Heisey

Recent Acquisitions – Partial Listing

- The Spire on the Square, a History of St. John's Episcopal Church, Carlisle, Pa., 1752-2002*, Foreword by Merri Lou Scribner Schaumann. 2002. 191pp; hardcover. St. John's Episcopal Church, Carlisle, PA 17013. Donated by Rev. Mark Scheneman.
- 1930 Federal Census*, Microfilm, Reel 2024 and Microfilm Reel 2025, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Society Purchase.
- Abbreviations & Acronyms, a Guide for Family Historians*, compiled by Kip Sperry, 2000. 201pp; softcover. Ancestry Publishing, Orem, UT. Donated by Greg Allen.
- Wood & Perot's Portfolio of Original Designs of Iron Railings, Verandahs, Settees, Chairs, Tables, and Other Ornamental Iron Work, Philadelphia, Pa.* 1858. (photocopy) 3-ring binder. Collected by Staff.
- Robert Wood & Co., Portfolio of Original Designs of Ornamental Iron Work, Philadelphia, Pa.*, 1875. (Photocopy). Collected by Staff.
- Robert Smith, Architect, Builder, Patriot 1722-1777*, Charles E. Peterson, 2000. The Anthenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pa. Donated by The Anthenaeum of Philadelphia.
- Indian Captive, The Story of Mary Jemison*, Lois Lenski, 1941, reprinted 1969. 298pp; softcover. Donated by Lorraine Luciano.
- Duey Huguenot Families in Europe and America, 1500 to 2000*, Reverend Charles J. Duey Sr. 2002. Donated by Herbert D. Duey.
- Letterkenny Army Depot: 60th Anniversary, Commemorative Letterkenny Army Depot History 1942-2002*, Dawn M. Hamsher, c2002. Compact Disk (180+ slides, videos, photos including pre-1942 landowners). Donated by Dawn M. Hamsher.
- The Palatine Immigrant*, Collection of *Palatine Immigrant* publications from.. 1999, 2000, and 2001. Donated by Meredith L. Rials.

Toland Mission Church, a Journey Through 75 Years, 1926 to 2001. 41pp; softcover.
Donated by Arthur Rhoads.

Naturalizations of Foreign Protestants in the American and West Indian Colonies,
edited by M.S. Giuseppi, 1921, reprinted 1995. 195pp; softcover.
Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. Baltimore, Md. Donated by Mrs. Frank
Shannon.

Young People's New Pictorial Library of Poetry and Prose, 1888 (includes a chapter
entitled "Carlisle School For Indian Pupils", pp. 105-115, by Margaret
Sidney). Donated by Pat Fischer.

*Number Seven of the Thirteen: an unofficial Regimental History and Muster Roll of
the 7th Pennsylvania Reserves, Voluntary Infantry Regiment (36th Pennsylvania
Volunteers), 1861-1864*, William C. Weidner Jr. 126pp; softcover. Donated
by William C. Weidner.

Descendants of Peter Arnold, John A. Mahey, revised 2001. 437pp; softcover.
Pennsylvania German Society, University Park, Pa. Donated by John A.
Mahey.

Foreigners in Their Own Land: Pennsylvania Germans in the Early Republic. Steven
M. Nolt, 2002. 238pp, hardcover. Pennsylvania German Society, University
Park, Pa. Donated by Dr. Robert M. Kline.

The Ojibwa, People of the Great Lakes, Anne M. Todd, 2003. 48pp; hardcover.
Bridgestone Books, Mankato, MN. Donated by Capstone Press.

The Sioux, People of the Great Plains, Anne M. Todd, 2003. 48pp; hardcover.
Bridgestone Books, Mankato, MN. Donated by Capstone Press.

On Teaching Genealogy, Fran Carter, 1989. 53pp; softcover. American
Genealogical Lending Library, Bountiful, UT. Society Purchase.

Collection of items related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition including:

*Introduction / Timeline to Three Journals of The Lewis & Clark Expedition, 1804-
1806*, Facsimile Edition, 2000.

Lewis and Clark Codices, Codex A.- Clark. Journal May 13, 1804- Aug. 14, 1804,
Facsimile, 2000.

Lewis and Clark Codices, Codex E.- Lewis. Journal May 24, 1905- Jul.16, 1805, Facsimile, 2000.

Lewis and Clark Codices, Codex J.- Lewis. Journal Jan.1, 1806- Mar.20, 1806, Facsimile, 2000. Donated by Joseph-James Ahern

Adult Museum Programs, Designing Meaningful Experiences, Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer, et.al., 2002. Society Purchase.

Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Index to Volumes 76 - 123, 1952 - 1999, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 2001. Donated by Dr. Whitfield Bell Jr.

The Mentzer-Zeigler Family, A Story of Pennsylvania-Germans in Cumberland County, Winema R. Leard Maxwell, 1981. Donated by Larry E. Mentzer.

Carlisle Friends Meeting, 1980 - 1990, compiled and edited by Don Kovacs, 1990. Donated by Carlisle Friends Meeting.

Everybody Can Be Somebody, the Story of Amelia Beall Boswell Scott Lane, by Patricia Wise Strickler. Donated by Patricia W. Strickler.

Beth Shalom Cemetery Inscriptions, and Mohler Dunker Cemetery Inscriptions, Elizabeth Landis Carson, 2002. Donated by Elizabeth Landis Carson.

Camp Hill Borough Cemetery Transcription, West Shore YMCA Genealogy Club, 2002. 90pp; softcover. Donated by the West Shore YMCA Genealogy Club.

Additional Acquisitions:

Collection of auction flyers, 1949 – 1980. Donated by Pierson K. Miller.

Collection of property records, surveys, and maps. Donated by Pierson K. Miller.

Collection of items relating to the life and career of Cumberland County Commissioner Raymond W. Sawyer. Donated by Raymond C. and Sharon Sawyer.

Collection of items relating to the visit of Charles A. Lindbergh to New Cumberland when cross country mail service was initiated at Harrisburg Airport. Donated by Mrs. David (Lida Fox) Gerhardt.

Collection of items relating to the life of Carroll Flickinger. Donated by his daughter, Dr. Barbara Weary.

Publications In Print

The County Heritage Series

<i>The Bitter Fruits: The Civil War Comes to a Small Town in Pennsylvania</i> (1998). David G. Colwell	Sale Price	\$14.82
<i>In Pursuit of Pleasure: Leisure in Nineteenth Century Cumberland County</i> (1997). Clarke Garrett		\$13.91
<i>Past Receipts, Present Recipes</i> (1996). Members and Friends of the Cumberland County Historical Society		\$35.00
<i>The Indian Industrial School, 1879–1918</i> (1993, paperback 2000). Linda F. Witmer		\$24.95
<i>Taverns of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1750–1840</i> (1994). Merri Lou Schaumann		\$34.95
<i>“...Drive the Road and Bridge the Ford...” Highway Bridges of Nineteenth Century Cumberland County</i> (1992). Paul E. Gill		\$24.95
<i>Twentieth Century Thoughts Carlisle: The Past Hundred Years</i> (2001). Ann Kramer Hoffer		\$24.95
Add Pennsylvania State Sales Tax of 6% and \$2 for postage and handling.		

Booklets and Pamphlets

<i>Three Cumberland County Woodcarvers</i> . Milton E. Flower (1986)	\$5.00
<i>Made in Cumberland County: The First One Hundred Years</i> . Cumberland County Historical Society (1991)	\$5.00
<i>Cumberland County History</i> . Single issues, as available	\$5.00
<i>Walking Guide to Historic Carlisle, PA</i> (2001)	tax included \$5.50
<i>Confederate Invasion of the West Shore, 1863</i> . Robert G. Crist (1963, reprint 1995)	\$6.50
<i>History of Pine Grove Furnace</i> . Lenore Embrick Flower (1933; reprint 2003)	\$6.00

Add Pennsylvania State Sales Tax of 6% and \$2 for postage and handling.

A complete list of Society publications in print is available on request.