



Bernville Centennial

AUGUST 31, SEPTEMBER 1-2 1951

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK

BERNVILLE, PA.

1907



1951

Forty-Fourth Anniversary

Capital	\$75,000.00
Surplus and Profits	\$90,000.00
Total Resources	\$1,500,000.00

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

MEMBER FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

OFFICIAL
SOUVENIR BOOKLET
Bernville Centennial Celebration
ONE HUNDRED YEARS
1851 — 1951

*Amid green pastures,
Beside still waters,
The cup runneth over.*

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Photo by OWEN STOUT

Foreword

IN FEBRUARY, 1949, several members of Bernville's borough Council attended a banquet held at Kutztown. The main speech of the evening dealt with a general history of Berks County's boroughs. During the course of the lecture a strong point was made that Bernville could look forward to celebrating its centennial in 1951. At the close of the Kutztown meeting Mr. Stanley A. Klopp, then President of the Council of Bernville, remarked, "We'll see to that."

Accordingly, during the summer of 1950, members of the Council, aided by Charles Kalbach, Henry Kalbach, James Balthaser, H. Robert Miller and several others held preliminary meetings. The sudden death of H. Robert Miller, during the closing weeks of 1950 cast a pall over the spirits of the planners, but in February, 1951, the committee was reassembled, this time augmented by representatives of civic, service, church, social, educational and industrial organizations of the Bernville-Penn-Jefferson-North Heidelberg area.

It was not long before encouragement and assistance came from many, some of them unforeseen, sources. A splendid spirit of cooperative effort led to coordinated planning and ready

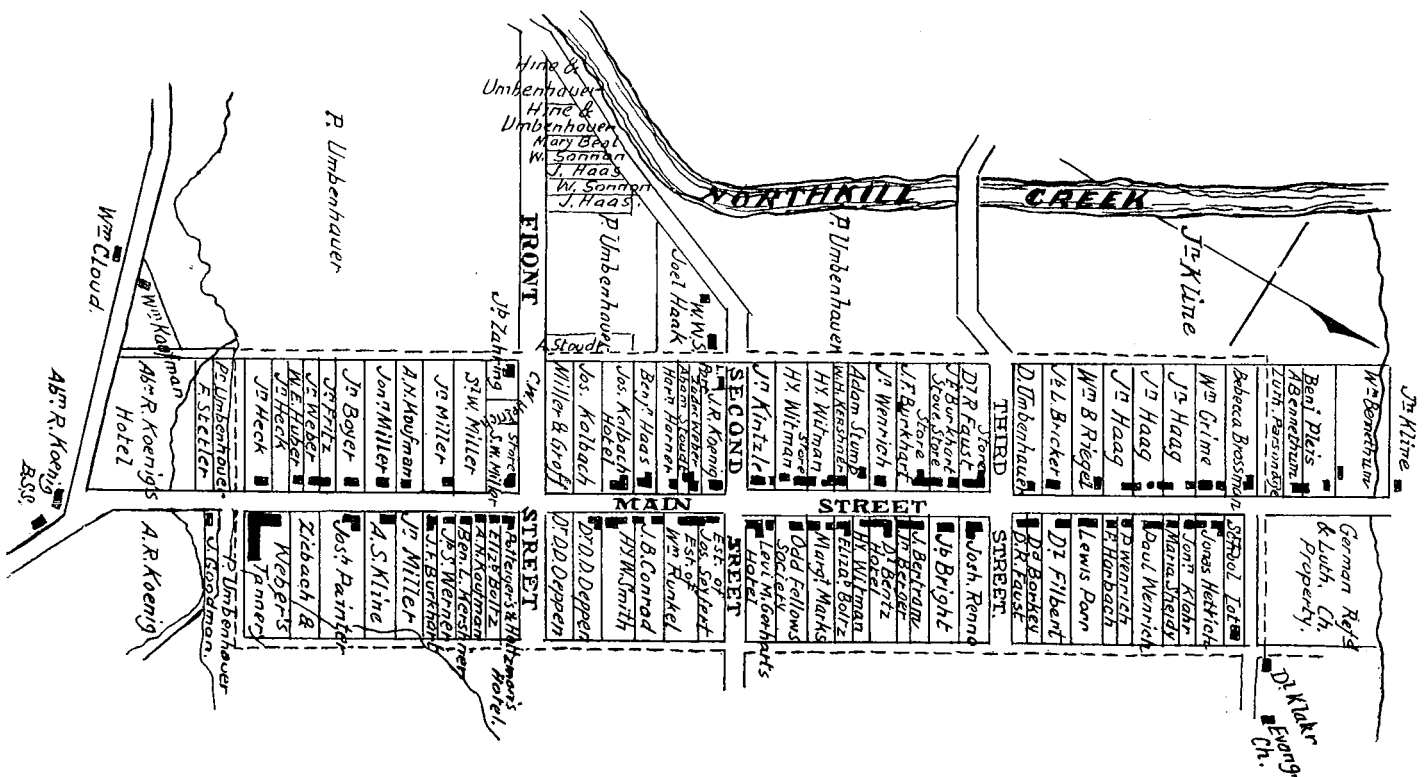
hands and hearts were available to carry through the many labors of love involved in a community effort.

One of the tasks involved the publication of this booklet. It called for research, consultation, photography, editing, publishing and distribution. The financial obligations involved were readily met by the generosity of our advertisers. Much of the spade work in collecting materials was done by the students of Penn-Bernville High School as they gathered material for the PENNANT, the school's yearbook, and for the Commencement Pageant. Added impetus was gained when the editor of the Historical Review of Berks County decided to use the story of Bernville as the featured article in the summer issue of that excellent magazine.

Materials for that article were assembled by Dr. LeRoy Kline, Mr. Dennis Fiant, Professor J. Paul Burkhart and the editor, Donald R. Shenton.

The PENNANT and the Historical Review made their appearance during the early summer of 1951 and both served to accelerate interest in the centennial observance. This booklet is designed for distribution during the three days of the celebration.

It has been the purpose of this committee to avoid too much duplication of materials. The two centuries which have rolled over these valleys in western Berks have provided a great store of historical facts. It is always a difficult matter to cull the more significant ones for the record. Any selection must be, unavoidably, subjective on the part of the compiler. This responsibility we accept as a part of the nature of things. We cannot be held responsible for data which, for one reason or another never came to our notice. In a cooperative effort of



this kind the criticism for failure to include must be shared with those whose interest should have led them to supply the data and materials. We ask no individual reward for our efforts; we accept no blame for errors of omission.

The main currents in the sweep of Bernville's history must be included in any official publication. To this extent we must duplicate some materials found in contemporary publications. Many details of business ventures, church history, educational and civic institutions may be found in the PENNANT; many broad concepts, with history in perspective, may be found in the Historical Review of Berks County. This booklet is designed as a souvenir to be prized for its immediate values and cherished as a compendium of the salient elements of life in Bernville.

The Committee

<i>Columbus</i>	1492
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	1681
<i>Bern Township</i>	1738
<i>Berks County</i>	1752
<i>Bernville</i>	1851
<i>Centennial</i>	1951

Active, Civic, Social and Fraternal Organizations—Bernville—1951

American Legion

American Legion Auxiliary

Bernville Grange

Boy Scouts

Fire Company, Number One

Hospital Auxiliary

Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Juvenile Grange

Ladies Aid Societies, both churches

Lions International

Northkill Rod and Gun Club

Parent-Teachers Association

Patriotic Order Sons of America

Pollyannas

Red Cross Auxiliary

Shepherds of Bethlehem

Socialites

Old Home Week



OFFICIAL

Program and Souvenir Book

OF

BERNVILLE

Berks County  Pennsylvania

Published by the
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Ex-Sheriff G. D. Fahrenbach	Thos. J. Zerby, Esq.
G. G. Blatt	C. M. Richardson

Bernville

1722—1951

WE ARE celebrating one hundred years of Bernville's existence as an incorporated borough. The community is much older, however, extending backward through time to that hazy period when redmen roamed along the Kittatiny hills which we now call the Blue Mountains. The arrowhead of white quartz that the farmer turns up with the plow is one of the artifacts which tell a silent tale of the unrecorded history of this region.

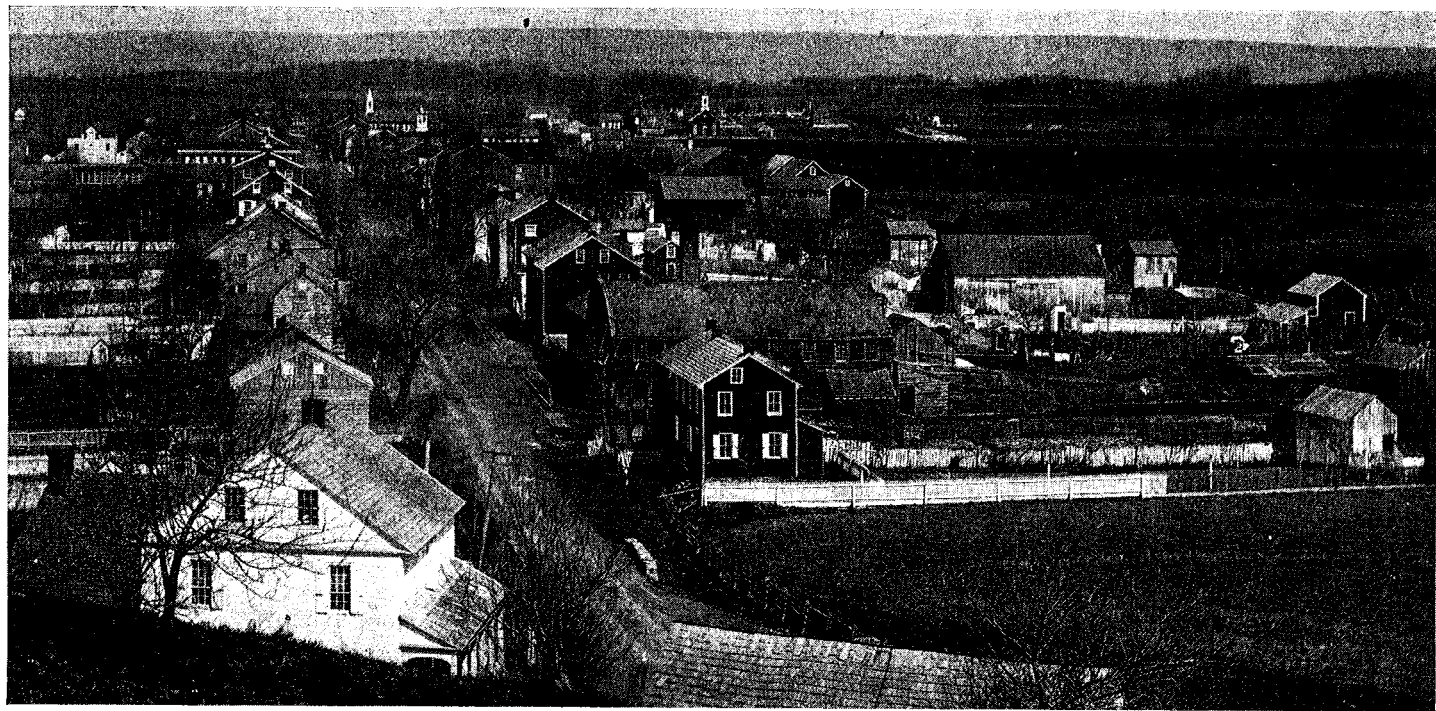
"Paper is patient" is the English form of one of our Pennsylvania German adages, *Papier iss geduldich*. It was not until the white man brought paper into the New World that we can attempt to present history which at least presumes to be factually correct.

In the collection of the Penn-Physick Papers, now housed in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, there is evidence that in 1722 the Palatine settlers of New York province sent two emissaries southward along the Susquehanna to explore the lands along the Tulpehocken creek in the province of the

Penns. The report which these explorers brought back to their people in the Schoharie region along the Mohawk river, in New York, presented a glowing picture of fertile soil and friendly nature. The following year, 1723, a group of thirty-three families packed their belongings and set upon their journey, southward. By raft and canoe, driving their cattle overland, they reached the mouth of the Swatara Creek, near present-day Middletown, on the Susquehanna, and then penetrated the wooded lands to the east which then, as now, were drained by the Tulpehocken Creek. While most of the earliest comers settled in Bethel, Marion and Tulpehocken townships, those who followed the vanguard in the trek from New York to Pennsylvania deployed themselves into the Heidelbergs and Bern townships. As early as 1730 two churches had already been established in the area of the Bernville Community. They were the Northkill Union Church, parent church of Frieden's Lutheran and St. Thomas Reformed, and Christ's Church, still known as the Little Tulpehocken.

The Tulpehocken region thus occupied by the wanderers from New York, was, of course, a portion of the grant to William Penn, made by Charles II, of England, in 1681, but the lavish gifts of European monarchs had no standing among the Indian tribes of the New World whose only concept of land ownership was communal possession by tribes that acquired and held lands by sheer force.

In 1728, Chief Sassoonan, King of the Delawares, a nation whose capital then was at present-day Sunbury, protested that the lands occupied by the Germans from Schoharie belonged to the Delaware Nation. There were threats of reprisals against the farmers of the Tulpehocken region.



View of Bernville—1907

From a purely legalistic standpoint the Delawares had very little claim to the land. During his lifetime (1643-1718) William Penn had held many purchasing treaties, buying some of his granted domains as often as four times over and over. His sons, Thomas and Richard, as his heirs, had continued this generous policy. True, the items of the white man's wealth, given in payment, were far less than the actual worth of the lands, but, from the white man's point of view a contract had been made in good faith.

The Delaware claim was faulty in another respect. Before the settlers left their northern homes to settle in Tulpehocken they had the blessing of the Mohawk Indians, one of the Six Nations in the powerful Iroquois Confederacy. The Six Nations were, in Indian politics, the overlords of the Delawares. The Pennsylvania tribes had been subjugated by the haughty Iroquois and owed fealty to their "protectors" of the Finger Lake region in New York.

It was largely the issue of the purchase of 1732 which introduced Conrad Weiser into the affairs of state. Because there were a number of vexing problems growing out of Pennsylvania's relations with the Six Nations of New York and her own Delawares, a general conference was held at Philadelphia in the late summer of 1732. Conrad Weiser was the interpreter. By the Purchase of 1732 the Penns acquired full title to the area which today forms Berks and Lehigh Counties. Indian problems did not disturb the Bernville area from 1732 until the horrendous period from 1755 to 1758 when the French and Indian War brought terror, flames and bloodshed to north-western Berks.

The early townships erected in the Tulpehocken region were Tulpehocken (1729), Heidelberg (1734), Bern (1738) and Bethel (1739). These were then a part of Lancaster county; Berks was not formed as a separate county until 1752. Later Bern was subdivided as follows, Upper Bern (1789), Penn (1841), Centre (1843) and Tilden (1877).

The first tax lists of Bern township, now extant, show 302 male taxables in the year 1752. Many of the surnames on this list have a familiar ring to us today. We can list only a few, for purposes of example: Albrecht (Albright), Bakenstove (Backenstose), Belleman, Bender, Berger, Brecht (Bright), Boone (Bohn), Bugs (Bucks), Burkey (Bergey), Clay (Klee), Conrad, Fox, Fromm, Gernant, Haas, Hatrick (Hetrick), Hester (Hiester), Kerschner, Kline, Lindemuth, Mast Mogel, Obold, Reeser, Stoudt, Umbehaviour (Umbenhauer), Wagner, Yoder, Zimmerman. Many of the families now resident in Bernville will find their surnames listed in the 1752 records of neighboring townships which were formed from the Tulpehocken region.

From a listing of "Old Inhabitants of the Vicinity of Bernville," published in 1907 we present a few additional surnames—Babb, Batteicher (Potteicher), Bertram, Dundore, Filbert, Geiss, Gottshall, Greim, Henne, Hettinger, Kreitzer, Schaeffer, Wilhelm. In a list, prepared by M. A. Gruber, from memory are found Beyerle, Blatt, Brobst, Degler, Derr, Fahrenbach, Griesemer, Gulden, Haines, Heffelfinger, Hollenbach, Hoover, Luckenbill, Machemer, Manbeck, Moll, Reber, Rentschler, Richardson, Rhine, Rothermel, Rupp, Speicher, Stamm, Trexler, Wengert, Zerbe and others.

We take this opportunity. . . .

. . . to congratulate Bernville on its 100th Anniversary, and to wish it continued good fortune. We take this occasion also to acknowledge our indebtedness to Bernville for the influence it and many of its citizens have had upon the management, operation, and business of our Bank.

While Berks County Trust Company, as its name implies, serves all of Berks County, it has a special regard for Bernville because so many of its citizens have been associated with the Bank as customer . . . employee . . . officer . . . or director.

We hope that in the years to come, the residents of Bernville and Berks County Trust Company will continue to hitch their wagons to the same star.

BERKS COUNTY TRUST COMPANY

READING, PENNA.

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Presently the following Bernville people are on the staff of the Bank:

EDGAR J. BRIGHT
HAROLD E. BRIGHT
WINFIELD S. FISHER
JEAN J. HOLZMAN

JOHN A. LUDWIG
CLARENCE W. MENGEL
WAYNE F. MOLL
ELIZABETH M. REESER

In years past, these Bernville people were associated with the Bank:

BARBARA J. EISENBROWN
HENRY L. KALBACH
DONALD F. KLINE
EDGAR J. MILLER
H. ROBERT MILLER*
LAWRENCE MILLER

EDGAR S. RICHARDSON,
ESQ.*
WILLIAM E. RICHARDSON,
ESQ.*
CHARLES E. STOUT
* Deceased

Founders of Bernville

In every established order of things there must be pioneers; men and women with vision and courage. These elements were supplied in Bernville's founding by Stephanus Umbenhauer, native of the canton of Berne, Switzerland. Secondary accounts give the date of 1737 as the date of arrival in America. In the absence of original sources we question this date because as early as January 10, 1737 Thomas Penn granted a tract of land to Stephanus Umbahawah. This was a grant of two-hundred acres adjoining the lands of Henry Spingler (Spangler)? and Caspar Stump "on the North Creek (Northkill) in Tulpehoccon (Tulpehocken)." This is the land upon which the borough of Bernville stands.

Stephanus Umbenhauer's estate was inherited by his son, Baltzer, after 1750. Baltzer's son Thomas Umbenhauer set aside 46 acres in 1819 to be sold as building lots. The actual history of Bernville, as a town, begins with that enterprise. The remainder of the Umbenhauer farm remained in the possession of direct heirs until in 1939 Leroy Umbenhauer sold the farm to Henry Kalbach and Clarence Mengel. Much of the farm has now been brought within the limits of the borough of Bernville as a result of the Act of Annexation, December 14, 1950. This Act, on the

eve of the Centennial of the borough, increased the size of Bernville by nearly seventy-five per cent.

Of the sixty-two building lots cut from the Plan of 1816 the first six were sold to Peter Bennethum. Lots were sold for \$30.00, subject to a ground rent of \$16.33. The size of most lots was 60x260 feet. Purchasers drew lots to determine the exact location of their property, this being an arrangement designed to avoid charges of favoritism against the seller Thomas Umbenhauer.

The first house was built in 1820. Of the 23 lots sold in 1820 buildings were erected on 19 of them during the course of that year. In a little less than a century from the time of the arrival of the white men (1723) the wilderness which flanked the Northkill had become a town. Thomas Umbenhauer named his development, Bernville, in honor of the homeland of his grandfather, Stephanus, (Berne, Switzerland).

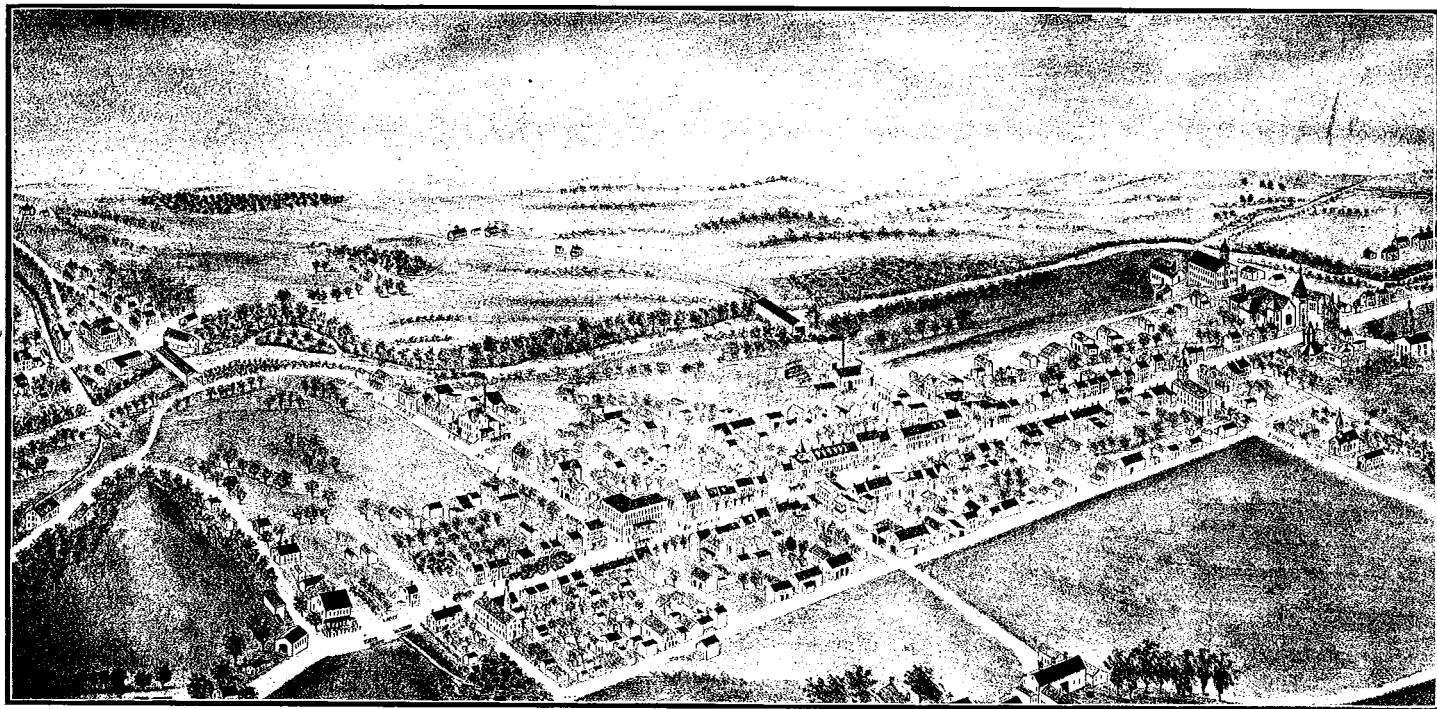
BERN—PENN—JEFFERSON

and

NORTH HEIDELBERG TOWNSHIPS

share

THE PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE



View of Bernville—1898

A Port On the Union Canal

Interest in building a canal to link the Schuylkill and Susquehanna rivers began as early as 1793 when President George Washington, surveyor David Rittenhouse, General Joseph Hiester, of Bern and Robert Morris, the treasurer of the colonies paid a visit to the Tulpehocken region for the purpose of studying the possibilities of an inland waterway westward along the Tulpehocken and Swatara creeks. After the building of the Schuylkill canal linking Philadelphia and Reading there was increased interest in a westward spur. Lotteries were organized in Philadelphia to raise the money capital necessary for the venture.

Work began in 1795 and continued for more than thirty years before the waters of the Susquehanna, at Middletown were united with those of the Schuylkill, at Reading. The location of Bernville was strategic and the growth of the town, as well as its origin, is traceable to the waterway which like, the bar of the letter H, formed the neck of the bottle in east-west traffic through the most thickly settled portions of Pennsylvania.

Prior to 1795 the Bern region had been purely agricultural, a characteristic which still marks the surrounding area. There were a few small enterprises which were directly associated with the processing of agricultural products, such as a tannery, a grist mill and the shops of a few skilled craftsmen. The building of the canal brought many workmen, mostly Irish immigrants, to the community and the needs of these workers brought some tradespeople to the village of Bernville.

Once the canal was completed, in 1828, the Bernville Locks became one of the chief ports along the meandering Tulpehocken. Now warehouses, lumber yards, foundries, a pottery, a distillery and other types of businesses came into being. The cargo carried by the canal boats along the Union, in its early years, consisted of lumber, clay for making pottery and bricks, iron ore and "gypsum" commonly known in Berks as "gips." This mineral was in general use as a fertilizer in the first half of the 19th century. Later, after a spur line to the canal was extended to Pinegrove, the anthracite regions were tapped for coal cargo.

Real prosperity came to Bernville and its surroundings as a by-product of canal traffic. The first census of Bernville, (1860) reported separately from Bern township shows a population of more than 400. The census of 1950, ninety years later shows only 362, and in 1930 it was only 322.

In the same year that the Union Canal was opened another event was taking place, in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, which was destined to check the industrial development of the little town on the Northkill. The first steam locomotive was run on tracks in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Iron Horse began to puff its fiery way through eastern Pennsylvania. Thirty miles per hour, in all weather, was too keen for the two miles per-hour, in good seasons only, which the lumbering mules on the tow-path could offer in competition. Ten years after Bernville saw the first canal boats along the Tulpehocken the Reading railroad built its Lebanon Valley lines along the foot of South Mountain. In slowly escaping gasps the lumber dealers and warehouses moved to Robeson, Wernersville or Womelsdorf, seven to nine miles away.

The Union Canal was widened in 1854 to accommodate larger boats designed to compete with railroads by carrying larger car-



Front row, seated, left to right: Earl Bashore, J. Paul Burkhart, George C. Kline, Dennis Fiant, Paul N. Sheetz, Dr. LeRoy Kline, Mrs. Leon Groff, Charles Kalbach, Miss Annie Schock, Mrs. Stanley Klopp, and Mrs. Pearl Kline. Middle row, left to right: Dr. Arthur D. Graeff, Ephraim K. Miller, Ralph Kissling, Stanley Klopp, Stenton Clay, Clarence Mengle, LeRoy Stoudt, George Ruth, Leon Groff, Lloyd Wenrich, Donald Shenton, Mrs. Arthur D. Graeff. Back row, left to right: Walter Wertz, Franklin Marburger, Warren Kline, Walter Rohrbach, Harry M. Franz, Henry Kalbach, Raymond Wenrich, and Lammas C. Klopp. The following members of the Committee were not present when photo was taken: James Luckenbill, Lehman Kissling, G. Gilbert Snyder, John Balthaser, Rev. Frank W. Ruth, D.D., Thomas J. Zerby, Charles Richardson, George Moll, Mary Susan Burkhart, Mr. and Mrs. William Kreidler, R. C. Schaeffer, James Groff, and John Kunkleman.

Bernville Centennial Committee

goes. But in succeeding years when other larger canals, such as the Erie, were widened still more, the Union could no longer expand with any hope of profit. This meant still further disadvantages for canal transport because the wide boats would have to be loaded and unloaded at the two termini of the Union while the Iron Horse, pulling a city of freight cars, snorted merrily along the routes to the westward.

The last boat to move along the Union was commanded by Captain John H. Zechman. In 1884 he rammed the prow of the *Monarch* into the locks at Reading and wrote *Finis* to the chapter of canal activity along the Tulpehocken.

Post Canal Transportation

In 1877 some interested persons, aware of the fate which awaited the Union Canal, began to plan a thirty-mile railroad from Reading to Strausstown, via Bernville. The intended route embraced more miles than the present highway distances between these points show. The proposed long route was to follow the winding courses of the Tulpehocken and Northkill creeks.

Some work was done in an effort to carry through this plan. Cuts for a railroad bed may be seen near the summer camp south of Bernville and at the William Keppley property. Needless to say, the bubble burst and no tracks were ever laid through Bernville.

Three stage coach lines operated as common carriers, did their best to link Bernville to Mohrsville, Robesonia and Reading. Later these were replaced by motor bus service.

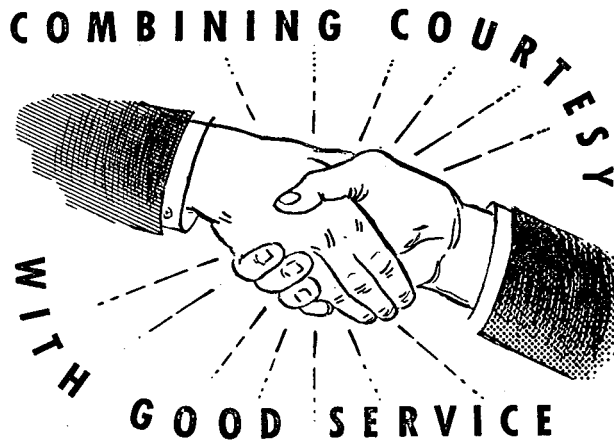
Roads

(Reprinted from The Pennant, 1951)

"The improvement of roads in this community dates back to the middle of the 19th century when (what is now) Route 83 was straightened through the valley of the churches. At a later date the road leading from the bank across the Northkill to Robesonia was relocated to eliminate curves and thus help to prevent vehicular accidents. At the time of the latter improvement there were visions of a new bridge to span the creek below the present crossing. Today there is little hope for such materialization."

The development of the motor car and trucks for freight has done much to overcome Bernville's remoteness from the busier centers of trade and manufacture. Projected improvements in highway construction and the building of the great Reading Airport in nearby Bern township all promise well for the future. Bernville never allowed herself to become a ghost town, in spite of the economic set-back brought about by the abandonment of the Union Canal. On the edge of her second century as a borough the future looks bright, indeed.

Bern is an ancient Gothic word meaning bear. Note the picture on back cover.



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BERNVILLE COMMUNITY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

August 31, September 1, 2, 1951

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G. GILBERT SNYDER

JOHN KUNKELMAN
REV. FRANK W. RUTH
DONALD R. SHENTON

These verses appeared on the reverse side of some of C. G. Blatt's photographs

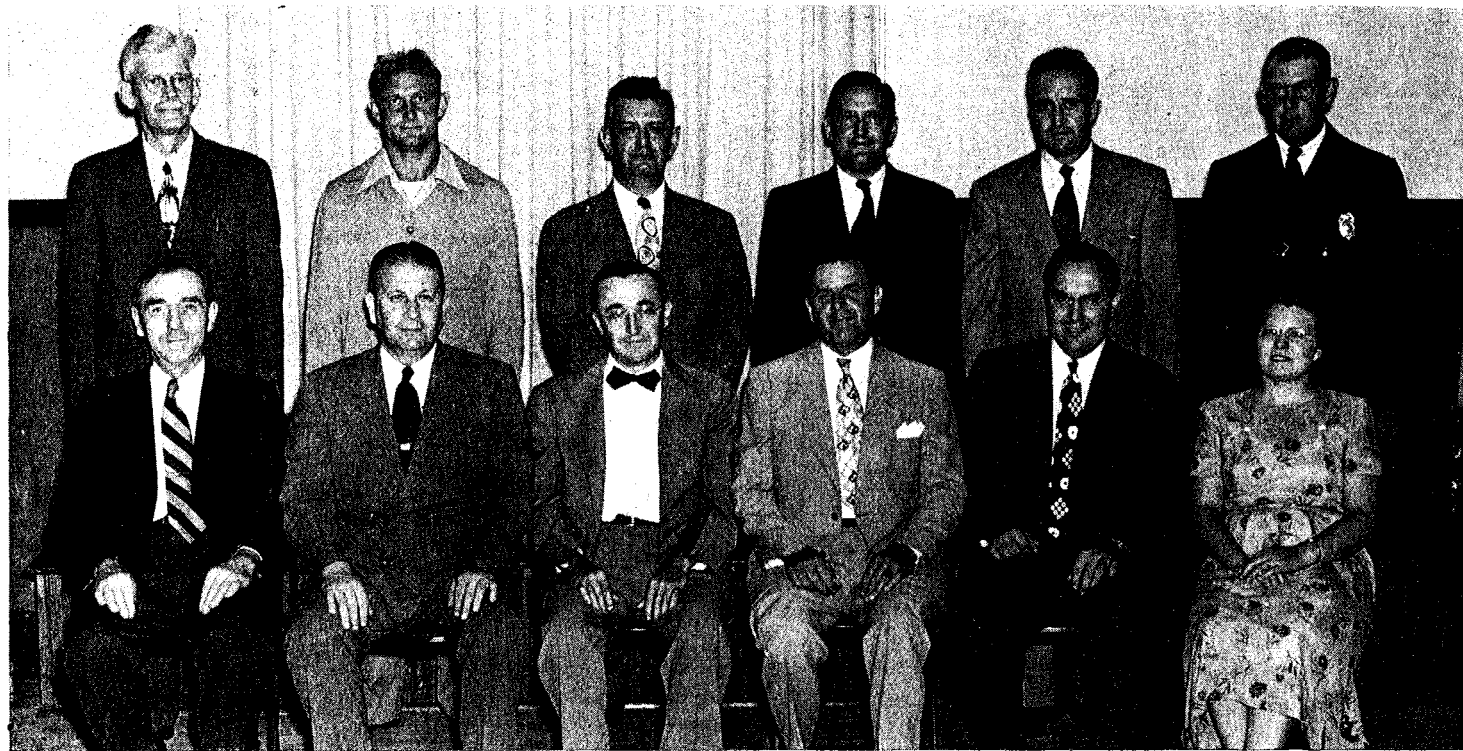
Isn't this a good old treat,
Where the public fears no cheat.
They know his pictures have no beat
In finish, excellence—and cheap.

Sour faces made so sweet,
And the style so nice and neat,
Besides they are so very cheap.
That the poor man need not squeak.

And all this you will find,
If you only come in time,
To C. G. BLATT, you see,
Who will still in Bernville be.

He knows that you must laugh.
Fifteen pictures for one and a half.
Duplicates fifteen for one dollar.
That's the way the people holler.



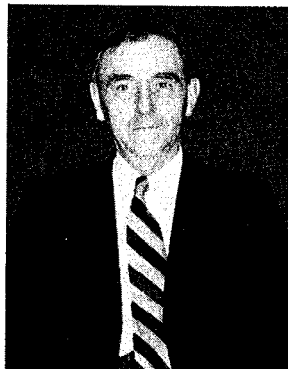


Left to right, front row, seated: L. C. Klopp, Treasurer; Stanley Klopp, Vice Chairman; Dr. LeRoy Kline, Chairman; Paul N. Sheetz, Secretary; Walter Rohrbach, Chairman of Program Committee; Mrs. Pearl Kline, Chairman of Decorations Committee. *Left to right, rear row, standing:* Henry Kalbach, Chairman of Publicity Committee; Harry M. Franz, Chairman of Parade Committee; Dr. Arthur Graeff, Chairman of Historical and Publication Committee; Irwin Kirkhoff, Chairman of Antiques and Exhibits Committee; Stenton Clay, Chairman of Concessions Committee; Homer Rentschler, Chairman of Parking Committee.

Photo by OWEN STOUT



DR. LEROY J. KLINE
Chairman



LAMMAS C. KLOPP
Treasurer



PAUL N. SHEETZ
Secretary



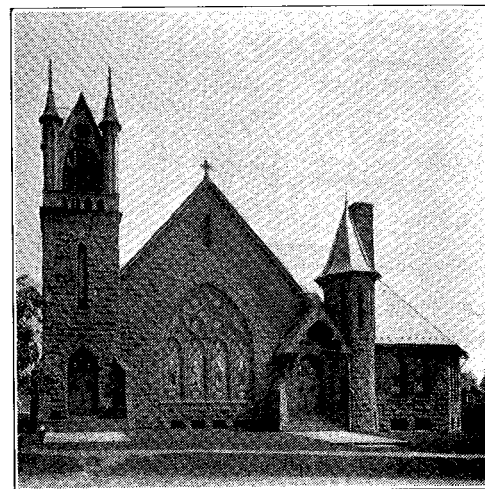
STANLEY A. KLOPP
Vice Chairman

Frieden's Lutheran Church, Bernville

Lutherans from Switzerland and southern Germany arrived at New Amsterdam, New York from Holland as early as 1623. Many of them settled in the Schoharie Valley, New York. About 1723 a group of them came from New York via the Susquehanna River and the Swatara Creek into the Tulpehocken Valley. When pasture land became scarce some of them and the Umbenhauers moved eastward into the Northkill Valley. Rev. John Casper Stoever gathered the Lutherans which followed into a congregation in 1730. In 1745 Gottfrid Fidler and Samuel Filbert donated two acres of ground and a log church was erected upon the site of the present Frieden's Church. The pastor's house stood in the middle of Route 83 to the east of a well still in use. The highway passed west of the pump in front of the Penn Township School House built in 1751. The parochial school house stood in the present street beside the parsonage. Besides Rev. Stoever, the pastors during the first century of the church's existence were: Revs. John Nicholas Kurtz, Emanuel Schultz, Andrew Schultz, John Knoske, Henry Riemensnyder, Daniel Ulrich, Marcus Horpel and John C. Smith. The communicant members during the year 1760-1800 ranged from 29 to 57.

In 1791 the old church building was so poor and rotten that a new edifice was erected north of the first cemetery. In 1834 sixteen members of the Reformed Church joined the 36 Luther-

ans to form a union Church. A steeple was built upon this edifice in 1850. The present Frieden's Lutheran congregation was organized in 1897 and the edifice dedicated the next year. The congregation is a part of the Shartlesville parish and is served by Rev. E. A. F. Kallenbach.



Fundamentally, spiritual leadership shares all the life lines of progress; withal, the Church bulwarking the community's assets and securities. Thus, as a spiritual leader, I congratulate the committee on its religious emphasis in the Centennial program.

Rev. E. A. F. Kallenbach, Pastor,
Frieden's Lutheran Church, Bernville, Pa.

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WERNERSVILLE, PA.

St. Thomas Union Church, Bernville, Pa.

St. Thomas Union Church came into existence in 1897, when the members of the Northkill Lutheran and Reformed Church decided to build new Churches. The Lutheran Congregation divided, a part of the congregation deciding to build their own church, which is now Frieden's Lutheran Church. Another group of the Lutheran members decided to go with the Reformed Congregation and build a Union Church, which was called St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church. The Cornerstone was laid in 1897, and the Church finally dedicated on September 10 and 11, 1898.

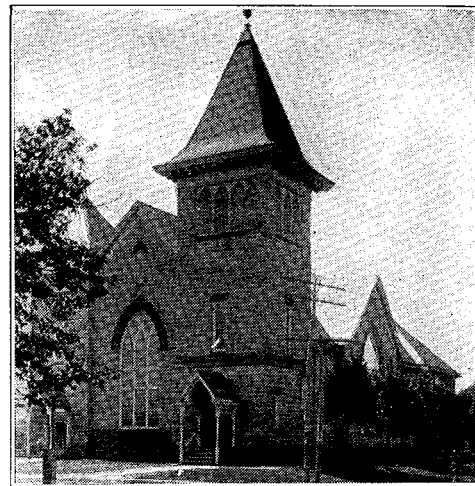
The building Committee members were as follows: Reformed: George D. Fahrenbach, Henry Bright and Levi Berger. Lutheran: George Schock, Joseph Strauss and Harrison Geiss. The first pastors were: Rev. Thomas C. Leinbach, Reformed, and Rev. William J. Gaby, Lutheran. The present pastors are Rev. Frank W. Ruth, D.D., Reformed, and Rev. Clarence E. Keiser, D.D., Lutheran Supply.

In 1903 a Palm Pipe Organ was purchased and installed. This was replaced in 1948 by a Wicks Pipe Organ with Chimes. The organists of the Church were as follows: Alfred S. Greenwald, Henry N. Haas, Simon P. Wilhelm, Mrs. Helen Heffelfinger Kline.

The following young men of the Reformed congregation entered the ministry; Rev. B. F. Luckenbill, deceased, Rev. Levi S. Mogel, deceased, Rev. Allen K. Faust, Ph.D., Allentown, Pa., Rev. J. Thomas Fox, deceased, Rev. Edwin D. Bright, Thurmont, Md., Rev. Frank H. Blatt, Stroudsburg, Pa., Rev. Raymond E. Wilhelm, D.D., Frederick, Md.

In 1917 the Reformed congregation built a new Parsonage, which was occupied by the present Pastor in May 1918. The building committee was as follows: Aaron M. Fox, Daniel Kreitz and John Luft.

The present membership of the Church is Reformed 510, Lutheran about 100. Mr. Harry Frantz is the present Superintendent of the Union Sunday School.



As the resident pastor of St. Thomas Union Church, I want to thank the Centennial Committee for giving so much of the celebration time for religious services. After all, the churches are the most stabilizing influence in any community.

Rev. Frank W. Ruth, D.D.

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Program

SWISS DAY

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1951

7:30 P. M. in Umbenhauer Park

The Reading Liederkrantz Chorus HERBERT FISS
Conducting

The Schuhplattlers

The Textilaires J. HERMAN MILLER
Conducting

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Intermission

The Textilaires J. HERMAN MILLER
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Interpretative Ballet MISS OPAL FREEMAN

The Schuhplattlers

Announcements DR. ARTHUR D. GRAEFF
Centennial Director

The Reading Liederkrantz Chorus HERBERT FISS
Conducting



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A Message Said with Flowers Is Well Said

Greetings from Berne, Switzerland

Berne, Switzerland,
August 1st, 1951

Mr. Walter Rohrbach,
Chairman of the Program Committee
Bernville,
Berks County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Rohrbach:

On this first day of August, when Switzerland is all beflagged in celebration of the 660th anniversary of its independence, while the city of BERNE itself is celebrating the 760th year of its founding, my thoughts are directed with particularly warm feelings towards Bernville, Pa., its prosperous communities and fine people.

I understand that Your BERNE TOWNSHIP was founded more than 200 years ago, that BERNVILLE was incorporated 100 years ago and that August 31st. has been set aside as SWISS DAY. This gesture of yours is deeply appreciated, not only by myself but by the Swiss authorities in general, especially the Bernese.

It is a nice thing indeed for your people thus to honor the memory of those hardy pioneers from Switzerland who settled in your land and who, through their faith, toil and honesty,

laid the ground for your present welfare. We in Switzerland can associate in these exercises with all the more pleasure since a deep friendship has always joined our country to your great United States of America, a friendship based on a similarity of Government and purpose, on common ideals and common aspirations. May this friendship endure forever.

CONGRATULATIONS! May your celebrations be a full success and may the future be filled with happiness and prosperity for each of you.

Cordially,

M. J. ROHRBACH,
Consul.





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Program

ORGANIZATION DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1951

2:00 P. M.

The Centennial Parade

Display of Floats, Antiques, Machinery, Etc. on the town square

4:00 P. M. in Umbenhauer Park

Music by the Centerport Centennial Band

Presentation of Former Residents and Honored Guests

8:00 P. M. in Umbenhauer Park

Concert by the Ringgold Band of Reading, Pa.

Greetings and Entertainment by Various Helvetic Societies



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Bernville



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BERNVILLE, PA.

Program

FELLOWSHIP DAY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1951

· Morning

Special Worship Services in Local Churches

2:00 P. M. in Umbenhauer Park

Homecoming Program

Conducted by REV. DR. FRANK W. RUTH

Special Music by Combined Choirs of the Local Churches

Directed by J. Kenneth LeFevre,

Supv. of Music, Penn-Bernville Schools

Guest Speakers: DR. CHARLES TREXLER, REV. JAMES BRIGHT

(Others to be announced.)

4:30 P. M.

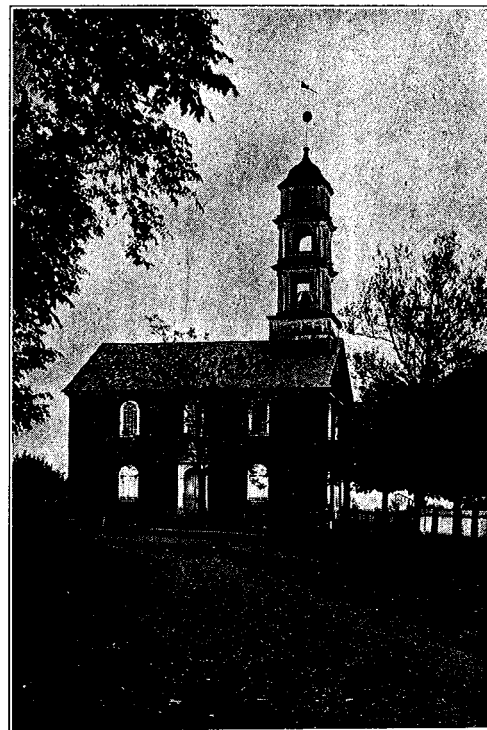
Baseball Game—Wernersville Redskins vs. Bernville Pretzels

8:00 P. M. in Umbenhauer Park

Homecoming Picnic

Variety and professional entertainment

Music by the Penn-Bernville High School Band



Northkill Church

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CLARENCE W. MENGEL

HENRY L. KALBACH

Black Jim

High upon the crest of the Blue Mountains lived lonely Black Jim the colored chimney sweep. His shanty stood near the site of old Fort Dietrich Snyder, not far from the point at which Route 83 climbs into Schuylkill County. The old fort was constructed during the French and Indian War and designed to protect Berks County settlers from the ravages of Indian attacks. Both the fort and Black Jim's hut have disappeared. An historical marker indicates the location of the fort but the exact location of the chimney sweep's home lives only vaguely in the memories of surviving friends.

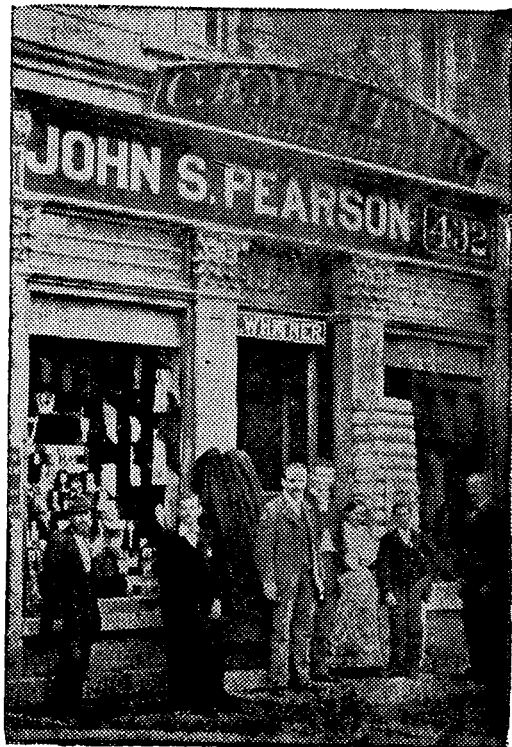
George Jackson, colored, was a private in Company G 45th Regiment, U. S. Colored Infantry. He served during the Civil War and after his discharge, settled in the Blue Mountains north of Strausstown, Berks County. He eked out an existence by chopping wood and by cleaning chimneys for the farmers in northern Berks. He learned to speak the Pennsylvania German dialect and achieved proficiency in the tongue. Although his given name

was George the people with whom he mingled called him "der Schwartz Jim," probably because his best friend was "Jim" Kline of Bernville. Kline was "der weiss Jim" and Jackson "der Schwartz Jim."

Jackson died in 1899. Since his death several legends have developed, more or less authenticated upon the memories of persons who were children during Black Jim's active years. Children who stayed out of doors too late after sundown were warned "Der Schwartz Jim grickt eich" (Black Jim will get you) and they were exhorted to be good boys and girls lest trouble impend when the chimney sweep visited their home when making his annual rounds.

If the following legend is not true, then by all means it should be, because of the intense human interest it contains. "Jim" had a pet crow. The two were inseparable. Perched on the colored man's shoulder the black crow accompanied the negro wherever he went. When Jim climbed into the yawning fire-place to clamber up the chimney his pet would fly to the top of the house, light upon the topmost chimney brick, there to await the appearance of his master. When Jim emerged from the hole, both bird and master observed a ritual. Perched atop the house, higher than the roof itself, two very black creatures sang hymns of praise. One of the favorite airs was "See that My Grave is Kept Green."

One fear haunted Jackson during his lonely hours. It was a fear that he would be buried in an unmarked grave. He confided his troubles to his friend "White Jim" Kline, pleading that at least once each year a flag should be placed upon his grave. The result of his plea was a pact between both Jims that either survivor would attend to the marking of the departed one's grave on the Sunday nearest Memorial Day.



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One morning in October 1899, Henry Neun, proprietor of the hotel near Fort Dietrich Snyder, found Black Jim dead in his shack nearby. He reported the discovery to the authorities in Strausstown and appropriate preparations were made for the burial. Mr. Adam Hiester, a trustee of the cemetery association gave permission to bury the colored man in the white cemetery. His body was placed in a far corner of the plot, next to that of a tramp, who, like Jackson, had served in the Civil War. The tramp's name was John Jacob Gohr, his nick-name "Bib Johannes."

Funeral ceremonies were conducted by Reverend Eli Hiester, the pallbearers were Henry Neun and Daniel Bagenstose. The latter became executor of the paltry sum which Jackson had left as his estate. Adam Hiester was "der forsinger" at the funeral. The ceremonies were conducted in the dialect. Colonel Keller and George Heilich were the bondsmen for the executor of the estate.

Jim Kline fulfilled his promise to decorate the grave each year. For more than a quarter of a century "White Jim" kept his annual tryst at Black Jim's grave, but when age took its toll Kline interested a group of younger men.

"White Jim" died in 1928. Those who had associated themselves with him decided to perpetuate themselves and formed the "Black Jim Memorial Association." There were four members of the Association at the time of its formation. The only living charter member is Professor Richard M. Moll of Robesonia. But membership grew as other persons observed and approved the annual pilgrimage to the humble grave in Strausstown. Today there are nearly one hundred members of the association.

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BERNVILLE, PA.

Der Schwarz Jim

Wie Kohle schwarz vun Kopp zu Fuss,
Gedeckt mit schtaawich Scharnschtee Russ,
Der Schwarz Jim geht sei Aerwet nooch
Un graddelt mannicher Scharnschtee hoch.
Er schaabt un kehrt in alle Eck,
Was gebt er um der Kohledreck?
Es sehnt's em ennihau niemand aa;
Er's lee deheem! Es schelt kee Fraa!

'S iss alles schwarz gans um ihm rum,
Es macht nix aus, er gebt nix drum;
Eb lang, gans drowwe, sehnt er yo
En viereckich Blacke Himmelblo!
Die Wol'ke hoch, dart zielt er druff,
Un Zoll bei Zoll, er graddelt nuff;
Un butzt der Scharnschtee wie er geht;
'S iss ihm gewiss gor net verleed!

Er peift un singt un dutt sei Pflicht,
Un halt sei Aag uffs Himmelslicht,
Wu baawoll Wolke, blo un weiss
Gemahne ihn ans Himmelsreis.
Die Neeger un die weisse Leit
Versammle all in Ewigkeit;
Un aeryets hinnich de Wolke drauss
Erblickt der Jim em Gott sei Haus!

Black Jim

English Version

As black as coal, from head to foot;
Encased in dusty chimney soot,
Black Jim, the dusky chimney sweep,
Climbs chimneys high, low, wide and deep.
He sweeps and scratches hidden nooks;
He need not worry how he looks—
Black soot— Black Jim— black fireplace—
Black dust won't show on Black Jim's face!

'Tis dark within the chimney walls,
As dark and dank as dust that falls,
To cellar floor, and covers Jim,
From head to foot; from limb to limb.
The only light that comes to view,
Is far above— a square of blue;
Where azure clouds float idly by,
Like fleecy ships that sail the sky.

Jim sings and whistles while he works,
Inveterate foe of filth that lurks,
In crannied crevice, foul and thick,
Encrusting red clay chimney-brick.
Yet, while he sweeps, his eye espies,
The cleanly cotton-tufted skies;
Somewhere, far off, God's Heaven beams,
Jim ponders— vaguely lost in dreams.

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Am Giwwelend schteht der gross Scharnschtee,
 Verschteckelt im me Wolke-See!
 'N schwarzer Wallem Schmok kummt raus
 Un wickelt sich um Gott sei Haus.
 Un endlich schwimmt es widder weck.
 "So Wolke mache gebt viel Dreck
 Im Gott sei Scharnschtee," denkt der Jim,
 "S henkt dick mit Russ un Schtaab gans schlimm."

Verleicht wann ich mei Pflicht do dhu,
 Dann ruft der Gott mich in die Ruh;
 Un alsemol weil ich's verschteh,
 Kann ich ans Scharnschteebutze geh.
 Un weisse Wolke g'schtreeft mit Blo,
 Instatts vun schwarz—die Welt waer froh,
 Wann mol en rechter Scharnschteemann
 Ans butze geht—so dann un wann.

So weess mer heit, wann himmelschwarz
 Drieb henkt die Welt in alle Blatz,
 Der Jim geht an die Aerwet;
 Un's hellt dann uff graad wie es sett;
 Schwarz dreht zu weiss un himmelblo,
 Die Schtaerne lache, haerrlich, yo!
 Un saage uns in ruhich Schtimmm:
 Des war gedhu beim Schwarze Jim.

—ARTHUR D. GRAEFF
 "Der Dichter vun de Dolpehock."

"The negroes, and the white folks too,
 Someday, will meet beyond the blue,
 Where Heaven's blessings all will share—
 What's that I see— off yonder there?
 A pile of bricks— a chimney, too—
 I'll need my broom, my brush, my mop;
 For, see, that roll of smoke arise,
 And form a black cloud in the skies!"

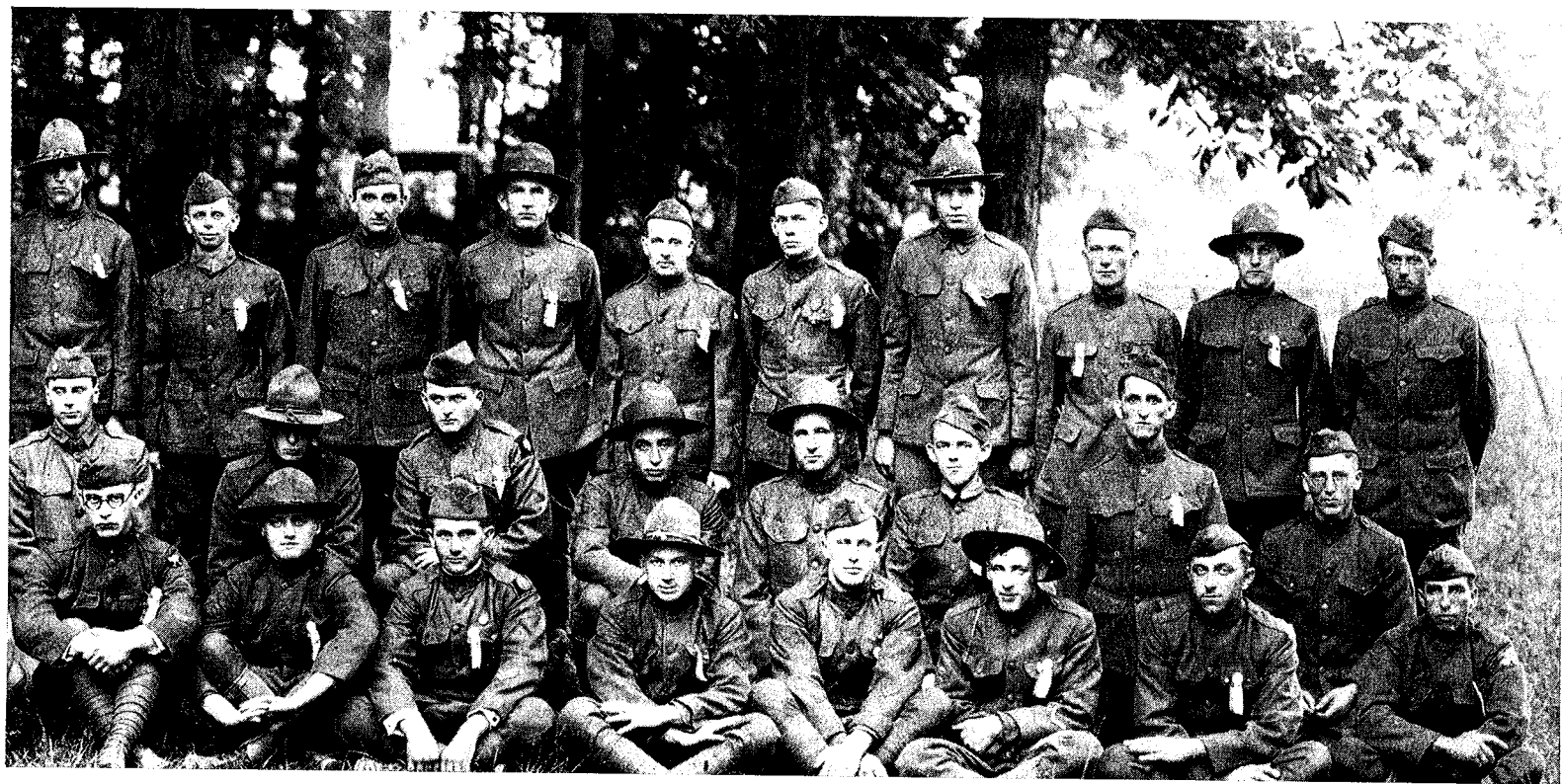
"A hearth that smoky clouds doth shoot,
 Must needs be coated thick with soot.
 And God will need a chimney sweep,
 To climb and clamber, crawl and creep,
 Into that yawning cavern— so—
 That clean, white smoke to clouds may grow,
 Instead of black clouds darkening skies,
 Soft eiderdown will please men's eyes."

And so, today, when clouds are black,
 Soot laden smoke from Heaven's stack,
 Enshrouds the earth—unnatural hue,
 There's lots of work for Jim to do.
 Soon blackish clouds are tinged with white,
 And through the darkness of the night,
 The stars peep out beyond the rim,
 In twinkling tribute to Black Jim.

—ARTHUR D. GRAEFF
 Read at "Black Jim's" Grave, May, 1938



Group Picture of 1919 Homecoming for Veterans of World War I. Left to right—Standing: John Kenny, veteran of the Civil War, Charles Trexler, William Richardson, Samuel Griesemer, William Webber, Arthur D. Graeff, Frederick Reed, Mark Riegel, Nelson Loeb, Isaac Yoe, Harvey Richard, William Derr, Francis Moyer, John Byerle, Henry Kalbach, Walter Berger, Lehman Bright, Albert Kline, not identified. Middle Row: John Hetrich, Robert Troutman, not identified, Paul Grimes, Leroy Kline, not identified, Ralph Richards, Charles



Kalbach, Charles Gruber, Harry Strause, Curtis Schaeffer, Earl Zerby, William Epler, ——— Dewees. *Front Row:* Oliver E. Kline, Walter Wengert, Charles Richardson, ——— Renninger, Henry H. Geiss, Paul Stump, Darius Wengert, Frank Richardson, Emerson Klapp, Charles Gruber, Charles Kreitz, Guy Schaeffer, Herbert Bare, ——— Spatz. *Not in picture:* Raymond Kline, Robert Focht and Lloyd Schell.

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Bernville Greys

On the Fourth of July, 1842 the patriotic organization known as the "Bernville Greys" assembled to celebrate the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. At 1 o'clock in the afternoon they dined at the Public House operated by Daniel Potteiger and, after the table was cleared, they elected their officers for the ensuing year. Albert Heim was elected president; Jacob Stamm, Jacob Beatty, George Brownmiller, Heinrich Sheetz, Peter Bani (Behney) and Heinrich Kirst were elected vice presidents; Heinrich Byerly and Abraham Andress, secretaries.

The Declaration of Independence was read and the following toasts (Trinkspriche) were suggested: To the Fourth of July, To Independence, to General Washington and his soldiers, to Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Governor Porter, Henry A. H. Muhlenberg, Gen. George Keim, President Tyler, to the Constitution of the Republic, to the Army and Navy and to "Das Schoene Geschlecht," the fair sex.

Cyrus Heffelfinger toasted, "David Renno, departing today.

His election as colonel is the best choice the people could make. Great honor awaits him."

Elias Weber: "Old Berks, the great fort of eastern Pennsylvania! Impregnable as the Rock of Gibraltar. Ready to furnish 10,000 freemen to withstand the enemy, the Whigs . . ."

Josiah Yeager: "Gen. George Keim, member of Congress from old Berks. He is possessed of great talents of true worth."

George Byerly: "Democracy is a form of government in which sovereignty rests with the mass of the people."

Samuel W. Miller: "Gen. George Washington, der Vater unser Vater landes . . . May his memory endure so long as the star sewn flag still waves o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

H. Showalter: "To the fair ones. May they gather laurel crowns with which to bedeck the Bernville Greys."

Jacob Stoudt: "To the Army and Navy of the United States, May they know only victory in battle and never defeat."

The Bernville Greys were a militia battalion under the command of Capt. M. K. Boyer who was the Democratic candidate for the office of Prothonotary of Berks. Many of the toasts were given in his honor on this occasion. Those participating in these tributes were Daniel Potteiger, John Miller, Joel Haag, John Steiner and Jonathan Hetrich. It appears that the politicians made an opportunity for a field day at these battalion musters. Only Democrats were paid tributes. Of Andrew Jackson it was said "May his last days be as quiet and happy as his life was active and glorious." Andrew Jackson was still living in 1842.

Greetings from the Secretary State of Switzerland

WU3 57 PD INTL FR CD Berne Via RCA 8 1203

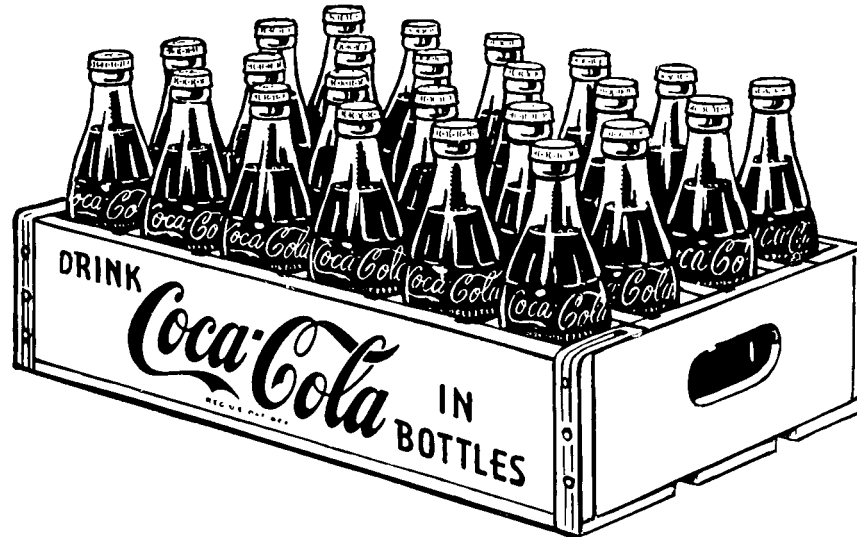
Walter Rohrbach President Comite Organization

Bicentenaire Berne Berks County (Penn)

Au nom conseil federal je suis heureux de vous adresser le

salut et les felicitations de votre cointaine patrie d origine a l
occasion Bicentenaire Berne et centenaire incorporation Bern-
ville. En cetee journee du souvenir nous formons des voeux pour
constante prosperite des deux villes.

Max Petitpierre.



Celia Von Bernville

The compilers of this booklet have attempted to establish the degree of truth in the legend of Celia of Bernville. In many quarters it has been suspected that the woeful tale of tragic love is apocryphal. Some students have dismissed the account as being the figment of some one's imagination.

Interest in the tale was revived when, in May 1936, the Pennsylvania German Magazine, March, 1911. The story follows:

CELIA OF BERNVILLE

By LOUIS REIGNER

When the old church at Bernville was razed and the red bricks were built into the new edifice, the church yard with its ruined wall and its crumbling neglected headstones, was left intact; that is, intact as time allows. Over the dim mounds of broken squares of sandstone and marble the long grass grows and dies and grows again, and every year sees the obliteration of faint letters and the history of a forgotten people sinking down into the earth. On a rounded sandstone, with a grotesque carved face and a long neck with a pair of hand-like wings, is graven in better skill than the rude decoration:

"Hier ruhet CELIA ZORNDORF, geb. 6 November, 1750, gest. 3 Juli 1776, Ach Gott" and the rest is undecipherable. Why that despairing cry to the Almighty for her who saw but 20 years?

Lieutenant Granville Pencoyd, of his Majesty's Fortieth Regiment of Horse, in colonial service, was bitter against the fate that led him along the muddy Bernville trail in May, 1776. The driving rain beat upon his long great coat and revealed a bit of scarlet coat and white breeches spattered with mud. At each lurch of his horse he bewailed anew the orders which sent him to "this Godforsaken country" to learn the "sentiment" of the settlers toward that monarch who was fast getting himself into difficulties with his largest possession. Behind him dragged two troopers, leading a pack horse with two heavy portmanteaux for an officer of George III and the younger son of Sir Henry Pencoyd of Pencoyd Hall must travel in state. A glance at the pack horse now and then reminded Granville of the dances and teas he was leaving at Reading and increased his prospect of being bored in a backwoods settlement with people whose language he only half understood. Thus it was that when they pulled up at the tavern at Bernville the suspicious looks of the natives depressed him all the more. His majesty's sovereigns, however, opened their larders not the hearts of the settlers, and the detail of the Fortieth found shelter and stables. The troopers, one of whom, Hollingford, spoke German, gradually reached a sort of friendship with the Pennsylvania Germans. Pencoyd, left to himself, spent the time wandering along the Tulpehocken.

On one of these rambles the officer happened upon a girl, whose slender figure quite discounted the buxom tendencies of many of the women of the settlement. At this venture, "I beg your pardon: Do I intrude?" he was surprised to hear in perfect Eng-

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lish. "Not unless you prefer a lonely walk." And the next day she came again, and the days that followed were Elysian. His majesty's lieutenant was learning the sentiment of the section. The girl's explanation was simple. Maximilian Zorndorf, her father, had been at Heidelberg University and had served under Frederick the Great. It was he who had taught Celia the languages.

Granville's friendship with the head of the community evoked unfavorable comment; comment which grew in intensity as neither of the two apparently noticed it. The crux of this feeling broke out in a yokel, Bauer Loomp, a farm hand in the employ of Zorndorf, and to the latter he blurted out, "Dei madel geht mid der booma-laddie"—"Halt dei maul!" snapped the old soldier. Loomp "held his mouth" before Zorndorf but in the hearing of Pencoyd he mumbled a slighting remark about the girl and the lieutenant knocked him down.

Smarting under the blow, Loomp threatened to "lay the Britisher cold," and other "young sports" egged him on.

Pencoyd and the girl stood at the end of a foot-bridge across a wooded ravine which separated the farm of the Zorndorfs from the village. In the meadow the hay lay in rows, for July 3 saw a late harvest and the crops not yet housed. Across the field the first light twinkled in the farm house, though the sun was just setting. From the edge of the clearing a whippoorwill sounded his triple call and a stray breeze stirred the leaves.

The quiet was undisturbed till Pencoyd, with words that stumbled into his throat, whispered, "Cele-I-can't go back to England-alone-I."—His arm swept around her neck and her head rested against his shoulder. Her hair disengaged itself and

a loop of velvet ribbon twined itself in Granville's fingers. "Cele," he said, and she turned her face up to his. "I—love—"

Crack! "Granville!" she shrieked, and her arms about his neck tightened and relaxed and dropped. There was a scurrying in the bushes. Pencoyd lowered the girl little by little, till her body lay quite still on the ground. Then he rose and brushed his eyes in a vague sort of way. The sun had gone down. He looked curiously at the ribbon in his hand, and then stuffed it mechanically into his pocket.

Zorndorf was silent in his grief, and his family busied with the three days of preparation for the funeral feast, went about their duties sadly. Loomp left the settlement without any adieux, and the natives were divided on whether he had been a fool or a bad marksman. Pencoyd was dazed.

On the day appointed, the old church was crowded to the doors. Granville, obeying only instinct, entered the church with his men, and sullenly the natives made standing room for them in the rear. The Reverend Kasper Stober mounted the pulpit, and after a long harangue in German, he continued: "It is better that this girl had died than that she go on her sinful way. Perhaps a worse fate was in store for her at the hands of—"

Zorndorf half rose in his seat but the fear of the Lord's anointed was strong upon him and he subsided and bowed his head. Hollingford whispered rapidly to Pencoyd and the latter quietly unbuckled his sword and handed it to the trooper. Then he walked carefully up the aisle. The minister and the people stared in amazement. Up the spiral staircase he moved and steadying himself by the pulpit rail he swung round and slapped the preacher's mouth. Then with tears in his eyes he descended and left the church.

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At the gate a courier met the officer and handed him a packet, adding in the hearing of the crowd, for the service had broken up: "These rebels have decided to run this colony themselves; met in Philadelphia and declared war against King George." Such of the natives as paid attention said merely: "Yes, well, I knew it would go that away." In response to the orders for mobilization, Lieutenant Pencoyd left Bernville within an hour and the red coats of the British Army gleamed for the last time among the trees along the Tulpehocken. Pencoyd did not open his lips until he came to Reading.

The third of July at Pencoyd Hall was an ever increasing cause of anxiety to Lady Constance, for on that day her brother's lonely bachelorhood and his 75 years became buried in the deepest depression. Accustomed as she was to his solitary habits and his dislike for interruptions of his retirement Lady Constance ventured to enter the library about evening. He sat by the west window. "Granville," she whispered softly. "Granville"! she called. She threw her arms about his neck. "Granville"! she shrieked. But the sun had gone down forever. In his hand was twined a bit of velvet ribbon.

—The Pennsylvania German, March, 1911

The revival of the story excited considerable interest throughout eastern Pennsylvania. Visitors trekked to the Bernville cemetery in search of Celia's grave. The dialect poet, John Birmelin, wrote a lengthy ballad entitled, "CELIA VON BERNEVILLE (Sic). He was obviously forced to change the spelling in order that another syllable be added to the town's name for rhyming purposes. The ballad is far too lengthy to be included here. It can be found in Volume III of the Publications of the Pennsyl-

vania German Folklore Society as a portion of the anthology of Birmelin's verses under the caption "GEZWITSCHER."

Dr. Preston A. Barba, editor of the "Eck" which first reprinted the 1911 account has expressed grave doubts about the authenticity of the tale. Our own interest was whetted because, as natives of the region, we had never heard the story before it appeared in 1935. Inquiry brought some astonishing results. We found people in Pinegrove, Schuylkill, who told the same story but the names were different and the setting was in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, north of Bethel. We found people in Womelsdorf who repeated the sorrowful tale but placed it, with other names, at Charming Forge, in Marion township.

Then began a search for the author of the story published in 1911. We located the author, Louis Regnier, in 1943. He was then a colonel in the United States Army, stationed at Rochester, N. Y. We will let Colonel Regnier tell his own story as we reproduce a letter which he sent to us as a result of our inquiries. He died in 1947. The reader will weigh the evidence.

Rochester, New York,
22, September, 1943

Dr. Arthur D. Graeff,
5740 Oxford street,
Phila., 31, Pa.

Dear Doctor Graeff:

Your persistency concerning "Celia" is flattering. I read your invaluable column in the Times, and acquaintances in Reading have brought your inquiry to my attention. But, as you well know, I review "Celia" only to weep with vexation at its adolescent errors of style. The story, less altered names, is essentially



Congratulations

Upon the public spirit and enterprise expressed through your "Centennial," and hoping that the occasion may prove most pleasant and beneficial to all, we would continue,

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correct but there was more to it than I dared tell, and a curious circumstance followed. I published it as fiction but I found it was true! The day Kriebel of the Pennsylvania-German Magazine came into the Times office with my mss. of Celia, he said: "We do not generally print fiction and this stuff is amateurish, but it has a ring of truth and I'll let it go." So it wrote itself.

My interest in the Berks County scene was aesthetic rather than archival. In those days my Pennsylvania-German was poor. Consequently, I could not, without the right inflection, obtain the full confidence of the local narrators in those excellent country hotels where Mr. Ralph G. Hill, (of Mount Penn) and I stabled our horses after long joyous rides through Tulpehocken, Marion or Ruscombmanor. One day in Bernville, from a fragment of the tragedy of "Celia," I cut out of the supposed then whole cloth a sketchy story. The characters might well be, for Moore, Meirs, a family extant in Philadelphia; for Zorndorf, another name of the same initial letter which may be plucked from the assessors' rolls of Marion township. It is not of Palatine origin, as are most of those listed under the Province, but of the Austrian Tyrol. It is a long name from which the present holders have cut off the suffix, and a very good one. The tombstone is, or was, in the northeast corner of the Reformed cemetery at Bernville. Crudely engraved of red shale, it was, even in 1910, broken, defaced, eroded and buried under long grass. The Zorndorf (sic) house is a long low wooden building on the northern outskirts of Bernville, facing a meadow about two hundred yards west of the point where the road to Strausstown crosses the Northkill Creek. I believe the older and larger part of the house is log, covered with clapboards about 1800. A foot-bridge leading to this house was pointed out as the place

where Loomp, ("dishrag," I think I called him) did the shooting. Loomp was a Nichtsnutz. He belonged to the Buschleute. To be polite, he was a loud-mouthed fecht bully, with an exaggerated ego. Urged by congenital hatred of the military, he became one of those insane instruments which racial antipathy places in the hands of blind fate. His identity is immaterial. So much for 1911, but Dichtung became Wahrheit.

Some years afterward I discovered evidence that verified my shot in the dark, so to speak, and in addition, corollary proof—beside the grave of Celia there was another, and a much smaller one. Poignant tragedy indeed! But I did nothing about it. I had no inherent connection with Berks County legends and my literary curiosity had passed from the historical to the psychological novel. Then too, some of the people whom this story might have touched indirectly had been very kind. "Ach Gott," thinksi, "lass' ruhe'!" Now, however, these people are dead, and there appears to be no objection to your readers' (as they seem to have done) tracing the facts about Celia v. Z—. After all there is nothing of which to be ashamed, and the family is, (or was) a very distinguished one.

I disclose these things largely because of a regard for the Times, where Frederick S. Fox, one of the best editors of all time, corrected my boyish exuberances on paper by throwing them into the wastebasket. Unfortunately "Celia" escaped him. Again, from the beginning, as a stranger, I was seized by nostalgic affection for the charm of Berks County, especially that section along the Blue Mountain north of the Stouchsburg-Strausstown-Shartlesville road and the sites of Forts Henry and Northkill during the French and Indian War. Now, in this our September, it is again at its best. Long ago I grew ecstatic at the visions aroused by

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its pure sky, its crimson swamp maples, its scarlet sage, its fresh blending of purple asters with golden rod, its orange-tawny toadstools under the chestnuts. I hear again, after thirty years, the fall whisper of the pine at the first touch of frost, the soft fall of mountain brooks, alas even the hiss of rattlesnakes in the huckleberry flats. Its cool plateaux of yellow scrub oak hide mauve mysteries reaching toward an inaccessible blue wall of infinite regret. True, in its nooks and crannies, as everywhere, lurk instances of venality and crime, but it made no difference then, and for that matter, makes no difference still.

Sincerely,
Louis Régnier.

NOTE change in spelling in writer's name.

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Michael A. Gruber

1855—1943

Teacher - Local Historian

Few people have left their mark so indelibly upon their community as did Michael A. Gruber. His biographer Donald Sellers Klopp, writes in tribute as follows:

"Farmer's son, school teacher to more than fifty future teachers, honored government clerk, retired after thirty-six years of faithful service, mathematician, translator, historian, genealogist and poet of his people are chapters in the life of Michael A. Gruber."

Much of that life and nearly all of eighty-seven years of devotion centered about Bernville and its surroundings.

Born in North Heidelberg township, near Charming Forge, Michael A. Gruber received his early education in the district schools of North Heidelberg, prepared for college at the Womelsdorf Academy and then earned both his bachelor's and master degree at Muhlenberg College. His teaching career extending from 1877 to 1891, centered around Bernville. His first assignment was Heidelberg Grammar School (Robesonia). From 1880-1886 he taught Bernville Grammar School; the following year in Penn township; in 1888 he was principal of a school in Marion, South Carolina but late in the same year returned to teach in the Bernville Grammar School.



MICHAEL A. GRUBER

Photo by courtesy of his brother Wayne Gruber of Reading

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Bernville Grammar School was a combination of Grammar and High School during the last decades of the 19th century. In addition to common branches of learning Mr. Gruber taught Latin, German and, occasionally Greek. The school term extended only six months but the popularity of the teacher and the desire of many students to accelerate their progress led to the organization of private sessions conducted before and/or after the regular school term.

In 1881 Michael A. Gruber was a candidate for the position of superintendent of the schools of Berks but withdrew his candidacy before the elections were held.

There were, and are, many fine educators who served and serve the youth of Bernville but to Michael A. Gruber belongs much of the credit for the fine tradition of education in Bernville. That tradition has led one writer to observe that the community's chief export during the period from 1884 to 1907 was *brains*.

Professor Gruber was profoundly aware of the high quality of his own heritage as a native of the Bernville region. During the fifty-two years he spent in the Nation's Capitol much of his free time was spent in historical research in matters pertaining to western Berks. His dialect poems, replete with nostalgia, were written during his self exile.

In his own valedictory, penned March 29, 1937 he says in part:

"Whatever I have accomplished, be it much or little, I have strived as the poet put it, to live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not only in breaths; in feelings, not just in figures on a dial; and in some cases I have counted time by heart-throbs."

Ee Daag

Nord Heidelberg, ich kumm zurick ee Daag,
 Die Hiwwele un die Dehler wieder sehne;
 Die alt heemet b'suche, wuh steht hoch, dick un breet,
 Der hunnert-yahr-alt Wasserpitchbaum,
 Und vom Brunne dort im Keller, mei Darscht zu leschte;
 Zu haere wie der Piwwie so freelich singt,
 Wie geege Owet das Badderesel peift und ruhft,
 Un wie die Gillerie so yachtich sinn;
 Die Schwalme un die Schpeckmeis wachte fliege,
 Als Owets, wie's am Duschper warre iss;
 Die kiel Luft zu schpiere unnich'm Eechebaum,
 Im Busch am Hiwwel Feld, wuh ich als Sundaags,
 In die Summerzeit im Schadde hab gerught,
 Gans umbekimmert un von Sorge frei.
 Nord Heidelberg, ich kumm dich wieder sehne;
 Ich hab gelebt so wie fiel annere Leit,
 Dehl Daage gut und annere net zum beschte;
 Doch will ich noch eemohl ohne Sorge ruhe
 Im Schadde unnich em grosse Eechebaum,
 Wan ich's im Zeitvertreib so mache kann.
 Awwer wann es mir in sellem net gelingt,
 Dann kumm ich doch, Nord Heidelberg, zu finne,
 Die Ecke wuh die wilde Erdbiere wachse,
 Und, wass ich schun so lang hab druff gewart,
 Die Friede wie ich yung und Sorgloss war.

August 1931

M. A. Gruber



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The Thorny Locusts

An Eastern Legend

Legends are persistent factors in human experience. They have a way of emerging from the dim horizons of human memory to vex the historian who searches for a thread of truth through the maze of conjecture and romancing which clouds the story. Frequently there is just enough substantiation of fact to forbid the complete discarding of the tale and there is always the suspicion or the hope that it may be true. The Legend of the Thorny Locusts of North Heidelberg is one of these.

We have heard the tale most recently from the late William H. Williams, whose farm adjoined one which belonged to Adam G. Stump in North Heidelberg, Berks County. Williams heard the tale from Stump who vouched that he had heard it from the Kalbachs, a venerable family associated with the "Little" North Heidelberg Church. And to add substance to the story Mr. Stump actually found thorny locust trees on the Dr. John Focht farm, located in the same township.

Two hundred years ago the present site of the North Heidel-

berg Church was occupied by a Moravian congregation, organized by Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, in 1744. Because this Moravian congregation was midway between the two large settlements of Moravians at Bethlehem and at Lititz, there were numerous visits by the churchmen from the two Moravian centers. Bishop Camerhoff, one of the outstanding Moravian clergymen of that day, held services at North Heidelberg.

So far the story is supported by facts that can be proved. The remainder of the tale is the part which makes the telling worthwhile at Easter time.

The great Moravian Bishop was delivering the Easter sermon at the little church. Among those who listened to him were several Indian converts who knew the surrounding country very well. The sermon centered upon the Crown of Thorns which was placed upon Jesus' brow as He was being led away for the crucifixion. The bishop waxed strong in his condemnation of those who had tortured our Lord.

The Indians nodded, as if they understood. Quietly they left the church auditorium and disappeared for a time. At the close of the service they reappeared carrying branches of the thorny locust trees.

The Indians were sure that the culprits who had pressed the thorns upon the brow of Jesus had secured their instruments of torture from the nearby trees of the thorny locusts. They wanted to join in an expedition to avenge the injustice which the bishop had described.

Probably we shall never know whether the story is a fact or whether it is only fiction. It is true that there were a number of Indian converts to the Moravian faith and that these Indians frequently accompanied the clergymen as guides in those early

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days. However, it is hardly likely that Indians who lived in Northampton, from whence Camerhoff came, would have known of the location of the thorny locusts in North Heidelberg. The tree is not, and never was, common in that area. They could hardly have passed the trees enroute because the location of the Focht farm is out of line for either Bethlehem or Lititz.

Could these have been local Indians, still residing in Berks as late as 1755? Hardly. There may have been a few elderly redmen, living near the foothills of the Blue Mountains, but by that date all active Indians, all families and tribes, had moved to the north country.

Did such actions fit the Indian character? Not for the roving redman. But the Indians attached to the Moravian settlement in Bethlehem were capable of becoming zealots in a Christian cause.

Are there any written records to substantiate the story? We know of none.

Then why tell the tale? Because, as one historian once wrote to us about a questionable statement he had made: "If it isn't true it ought to be!"

<i>Bern Township</i>	1738
<i>Berks County</i>	1752
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There are still a few oldtimers among us who were members of that efficient society against horse stealing known as "Der Pferde Gesellschaft von Bernville." It was organized in 1863 and continued to collect dues until circa 1910. The first published set of Rules was in the German language, 1863. Five years later the same publication appeared in English as the Rules and By-Laws of the Horse Association of Bernville.

The commissioners whose names appear at the end of the publication were John Groff, William Potteiger, Adam N. Potteiger, Samuel Balthaser and Gabriel Dundore. Elias Bickel was the president and John Staudt was the treasurer.

Annual meetings were held in the "Lower" hotel in Bernville on the first Saturday of each November. A fine of 25 cents was imposed upon members who failed to attend. Each commissioner was assigned a number of "riders" whose duty it was to set out in pursuit of a horse thief within four hours after receiving notice of a theft. Rewards were offered to the pursuers, depend-

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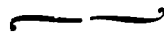
ing upon the number of miles that needed to be ridden to capture the thief or secure the stolen horse.

If the horse was not recovered the owner was entitled to receive a sum of money as his insurance payment provided that he had met certain requirements. First he had to be a member of the Association which was open to persons living within a radius of nine miles of Bernville. Each horse had to be branded on his left foot with a cross of prescribed dimensions and the brand had to be renewed at regular intervals to make sure that it was always visible. Owners were required to record the age, size, color of each horse he had insured.

The indemnity paid the owner was determined by a committee of three who, in conference, agreed upon the money value of the stolen property. If the sums in the Association treasury were not equal to the amount determined upon, then an assessment was levied upon all members.

The constitution of the association provided that at the time of dissolution any sums which remained in the treasury should be equally divided among all members.

The Bernville Horse Association served more as a deterrent against horse stealing than as an agency for recovering stolen horses. It appears that the "riders" were most successful in recovering stolen horses when they set out for the Welsh Mountains in southern Berks or travelled northward, near the coal country.



Officials—1951 Bernville Borough

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A Partial List of Business Establishments In Bernville

A *tannery* (1820-1900) located at site of Berger's Orchards and the residence of Jack Schaeffer; a *pottery*, originally operated by Levi Yonson, later by Benjamin Klahr—stood near the present Community Hall; a *creamery*, erected by Jonathan Miller in 1889, owned by C. M. Richardson, later Richardson and Ahrens; discontinued in 1949; a *handle works* established by Klahr and son, in 1868, destroyed by fire in 1882 and rebuilt; a *shirt factory* 1901, owned by the Hoffman Brothers; a *hosiery mill* owned by Walter High; a *shoe factory* which operated where the Danton and Delong plumbing business now is located; the Pleiss *carriage works*; the Jacob Myers *knife* and *spoon* works; the Witman *coal* and *lumber* yards, the Moyer, Berger and Kissling *grist mill*.

Philip Filbert was the first innkeeper in the environs of Bern-

ville. Samuel Umbenhauer built the first tavern in the town, in 1821; the second one was owned by David Bentz.

The First National Bank of Bernville was organized in 1907; the first *telephone exchange* was established in 1909 on the second floor of the present post-office building. The first post office was established in 1832. Offices were located in various buildings throughout the years. *Electric power* was furnished by the private enterprise of Harrison Kalbach from 1904 until the consolidation of the local company with the Metropolitan Edison Company. Volunteers have maintained a *fire protection* organization since the early days of the borough. In 1921 this organization built the present Community Hall of Bernville, The Bernville *Water Company*, organized in 1948, is one of the younger enterprises.

Limited space permits the presentation of only a partial list of business enterprises. Additional establishments, currently serving the community, may be found among our advertisers.

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The Deppen Cemetery

Approximately three miles southeastward from Bernville, not far from Mt. Pleasant is a little known burial ground which once was known as the Deppen Cemetery because the burial ground formed a part of the farm of Dr. Deppen. The entrance forms to the left of the highway which leads from Route 83 to North Heidelberg Church. Actually the entrance is the gateway to the first farmhouse along that route.

The last burial in this plot was seventy-five years ago, in 1876. The inscriptions on many of the tombstones are now almost illegible. Fortunately, however, Michael A. Gruber copied these inscriptions more than forty years ago, before the elements had obliterated many of the messages they carried.

One unique feature of this burial plot is that it is ground which was hallowed by the Catholic church, though not all of the persons buried there were members of that faith. There was a Catholic mission established at Mt. Pleasant late in the eighteenth century. Its leader was Captain Philip Schmidt, whose name appears among the buried in the Deppen cemetery.

Until very recent years the graves were kept clean by Mr. Clancy Lambert, of Mt. Pleasant. In 1940 Mr. Lambert was interviewed. He was then past eighty years of age. He remembered Catholic services in Mt. Pleasant. He told his interviewers, too, that there are approximately twenty Irishmen buried in unmarked graves. These were immigrants who worked in the digging of the Union Canal. An epidemic, known as "canal fever" claimed many lives during the 1820's. In the absence of scientific knowledge people attributed the disease to fumes which arose from the huge piles of wet, fresh earth, thrown up along

the banks of the Tulpehocken. Some of the victims were Irish workmen and because the cemetery near Mt. Pleasant was consecrated their bodies were interred there.

List of Tombstone Inscriptions in Deppen Burial Ground

Alwein, Elizabeth—See Philipp Schmidt.

Deppen, Catharine, b. Oct. 1, 1837; d. June 2, 1841; dau. of Daniel.

Deppen, Daniel, b. Feb. 18, 1801; d. May 12, 1863; m. Catharine Smith.

Felix, Elizabeth—See John Wummer.

Greth, Daniel, b. Feb. 15, 1784; d. Feb. 22, 1852; m. Elizabeth Schmidt, b. March 4, 1781; d. Dec. 18, 1840.

Greth, Daniel, b. May 26, 1806; d. Nov. 11, 1874.

Grath (Greth), David, d. 1849; son of D. & M. Grath.

Grett (Greth), Elizabeth, b. in 1755; d. Aug. 17, 1838.

Greth, Franklin Reuben, b. Aug. 19, 1851; d. May 7, 1862; s. of Daniel and Mary Greth.

Grett, Magdalena—See Philip Schmidt.

Grath, Sarah, old 14 W., 1844.

Haag, Elizabeth—See Joseph Obold.

Hetrick, Susanna—See Philip Obold.

Kisling, John, b. Sept. 14, 1801; d. Feb. 1, 1847.

Kisling, Sebastian, b. Jan'y. 31, 1773; d. March 25, 1843; m. in 1795 Catherine Schmidt, b. April 16, 1774; d. April 9, 1825; 2 s. and 6 dau.

Kisling, Susanna, b. April 22, 1842; d. Oct. 2, 1843; dau. of John and Catharine Kisling.

Kisling, William, b. March 29, 1830; d. Sept. 10, 1831; s. of Jacob and Catharine Kisling.

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Lambert, Jonathan, b. Dec. 15, 1798; d. April 5, 1876.
Obold, George, b. Jan'y. 1, 1802; d. Feb. 20, 1854.
Obold, Joseph, b. in 1762; d. Oct. 1824; m. (1) Margaret (seems to be Rudt or Budt or Gudt) with whom in wedlock 27 years, 4 s. and 4 dau.; (2) Elizabeth Haag, 1 son; and (3) Margaret Obold, d. in 1818 aged 47 years.
Obold, Philip, b. Nov. 10, 1796; d. May 27, 1843; m. in 1818 Susanna Hetrich, in wedlock 24 years; 2 s. and 1 dau.
Reber, Tillie, b. Nov. 3, 1864; d. June 18, 1873.
Rick, George, D., b. Sept. 7, 1853; d. Dec. 6, 1853; s. of George and Mary Ann Rick.
Schmidt (Smith), Catharine—See Sebastian Kisling and Daniel Deppen.
Schmidt, Elizabeth—See Daniel Greth.
Schmidt, John, b. March 6, 1812; d. Aug. 15, 1822; s. of Philip and Magdalena Schmidt.
Schmidt, Magdalena—See Adam Wummer.
Schmidt, Philipp, b. Aug. 12, 1747; d. March 6, 1808; m. Elizabeth Alewein, b. in 1742; d. in 1814; in wedlock 37 years; 2 s. and 6 dau. His wife had been the widow of Joseph Obold, with whom in wedlock 6 years and had 2 sons.
Schmidt, Philip, b. March 12, 1772; d. Oct. 21, 1813; m. Magdalena Grett, in wedlock, 13 years; 3 s. and 3 dau.
Umbenhauer, Samuel, b. Dec. 25, 1826; d. Jan'y. 13, 1844.
Wummer, Adam, b. June 7, 1779; d. Nov. 18, 1854; m. in 1798 Magdalena Schmidt.
Wummer, John, b. May 6, 1799; d. Jan'y. 20, 1866; m. in 1825 Elizabeth Felix, b. Sept. 30, 1802; d. Feb. 7, 1835.
One marker contains the inscription, "W. G. 1844."

Stump Burial Ground

Motorists who come to Bernville along the Robeson Road will see a sign marking the Stump Burial Grounds, a small plot a few hundred yards from the junction of the Northkill and Tulpehocken Creeks.

Stump, John, b. Feb. 18, 1746; d. Aug. 9, 1822; m. Barbara ———, b. Oct. 9, 1746; d. Aug. 17, 1805.

Stump, Samuel, b. Oct. 9, 1777; d. July 27, 1850; m. Anna Maria ———, b. Nov. 30, 1786; d. Sept. 24, 1842.

Children of John Stump and wife Barbara:

Magdalena, b. June 8, 1872; d. Dec. 11, 1775.

Barbara, b. March 11, 1774; d. Oct. 8, 1775.

Daniel, b. Dec. 14, 1789; d. Dec. 19, 1806.

Son of Michael Stump and wife Caroline:

Samuel, b. Jan. 13, 1842; d. Dec. 20, 1845.

Son of Joseph Painter and wife Magdalena:

Joseph, b. Oct. 9, 1849; d. Sept. 22, 1850.

Klein Burial Ground

This private burial ground is on the west bank of the Northkill creek, one mile north of Bernville. Inscriptions were as follows, when recorded by Michael Gruber:

Klein, Philip, b. June 17, 1742; d. May 9, 1815.

Klein, David, b. March 2, 1746; d. Jan. 28, 1814; m. Elizabeth Breneisen, b. Nov. 8, 1750; d. Aug. 4, 1827.

Klein, Elizabeth, b. Dec. 5, 1775; d. March 2, 1812, dau. of Philip.

Stump, Elizabeth, b. June 2, 1776; d. April 25, 1854; m. George Klein.

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At first the Bernville school was divided into two levels; one for the primary grades and the other at the grammar school level. When Bernville was incorporated as a borough it was necessary to establish a separate school for the students of Penn township. In 1850 the Penn school was established in the building now serving as a residence of the families of Mr. Charles Luckenbill and Mr. Lester Mengel.

In 1877 a two-story four-room brick structure was erected in Bernville. One year later three levels of instruction were established; the primary which included the first three grades; the

secondary which covered the next three and the Grammar School which carried on instruction through all grades from seven through twelve.

“The high school was introduced in this area by an act of the state legislature in 1909 appropriating money for township high schools. This explains why our present high school was not established by the borough. Penn Township’s first high school opened on the top floor of the Penn building.

On May 15, 1909 the first high school class was graduated from Penn Township. In 1920-21 the high school was moved to the present borough building. In 1922-23 the high school changed from a three to a four year program.

The present elementary building is still being used. In 1931 the Penn Township Consolidated School was erected. This included grades four to eight and the high school. Only grade one was operated by the Bernville school district. Grades two to eight and the high school were under the supervision of the Penn Township District. Penn sent her beginners to grade one and Bernville sent her pupils in the advanced grades to Penn. The rooms in the borough school had been rented by the township. Grades one, two and three were taught in the borough school until 1942. Then fourth grade was there. In 1947 grade five was also added to that building. Since that time the elementary building houses grades one to five.

In 1950 the Penn Township and Bernville School Districts formed a Union District, and plans for an elementary building adjoining the present consolidated school on the northeast are being completed so that a six-room addition, a modern cafeteria, health room and other facilities will be ready for use in the 1952-53 school term.”—THE PENNANT 1951.



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