

Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE

VOLUME 40 • Fall 2025



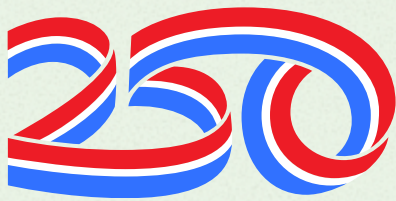
With deep sadness we report that Jane Niering, president of Paradise Historical Society for the past nine years, died on Sunday, August 10, 2025. She lived in Paradise Valley most of her life. Along with her support of many local organizations, Jane was a founding member of the Historical Society, of which she was a staunch supporter. Jane helped in many ways with her ready smile and deep knowledge of the people and places of Paradise. She will be long and fondly remembered.

At a special meeting on September 12, 2025, the board of Paradise Historical Society unanimously elected Alfred Johnson to be president of the society. Al has lived in Paradise for more than fifty years and is a leader in the Township's business community — he and his wife Carole owned the PA Dutch Farm, the El-J Riding Stable and other businesses in the Valley, as well as the Pocono Cheesecake Factory in Swiftwater, now under second-generation ownership. **PHS**

Welcome Al Johnson, new president
of Paradise Historical Society!



AMERICA



The Semiquincentennial of America's Declaration of Independence

July 4, 2026, will mark the 250th anniversary of the official statement of America's independence from Britain. Many local and county committees have formed to organize celebrations from floats, parades and fireworks, to contests, musical and theatrical performances, community parties, and historical displays.

Paradise Historical Society is working on a "Liberty Tree" project to plant a symbolic successor to the Boston Liberty Tree, where patriots would gather for mutual support during the Revolution. We would also like to identify and recognize Members of PHS who have forbears who took part in the Revolution.

Why they call it "Semiquincentennial"

"Quincentennial" refers to the five-hundredth anniversary of an event. By adding "semi" to the beginning, 500 is cut in half. So a "semiquincentennial" celebration commemorates the two-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of an event. Call it what you like — it's a milestone!



If you would like to take part in the Liberty Tree project or have a family member who was a Revolutionary War Patriot, please email paradisehistoricalgenealogy@gmail.com

Continued on Page 3



Fall
COLLECTING, PRESERVING, & DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

Immigrants Who Became PATRIOTS

★ ★ ★ by Sandy Dietz

In the mid-1600s many Germans emigrated to what would become known as Pennsylvania—mainly seeking economic and especially religious freedom. Many found their way to the creeklands and woodlands that would become Paradise Township.

Have you ever heard the surname Dornblaser? It was also spelled Dornblazer, Thornblaeser, and Thornblaser. What is this family's connection and contribution to Paradise Valley history?

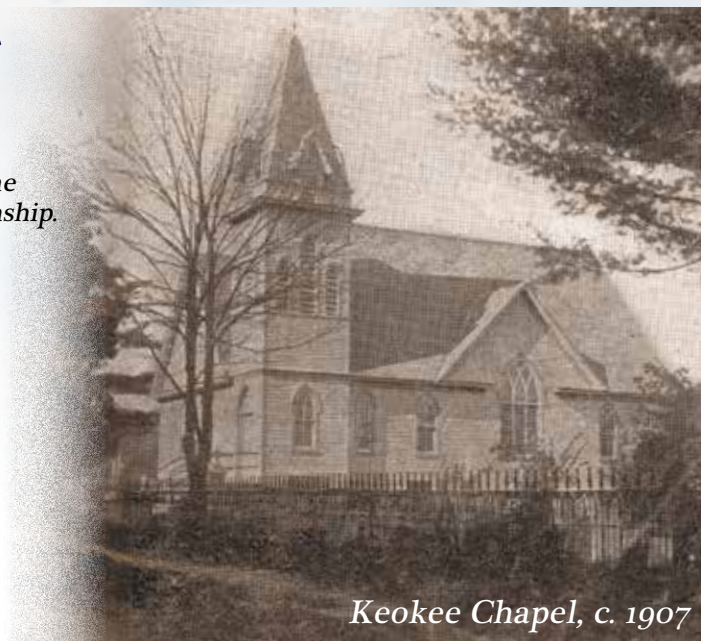
The Thornblaeser family lived in Benningen, Germany and emigrated to the Lehigh Valley region of Pennsylvania sometime prior to the Revolutionary War, settling in Nazareth Township, Northampton County. This is evidenced by records in their name at Tohickon Union Reformed Church in Bucks County and Dryland Union Lutheran Church in Hecktown, Northampton County.

The emigrant was Christian Gottlieb Turnblaeser (b. 1726 Germany; d. 1783 Bethlehem, PA). His name can be seen on a tax bill for Bethlehem Township in 1781. His son John Paul Dornblaser (1760-1804) fought in the Revolutionary War. It is John Paul's son George Adam Dornblaser who is the subject of our story.

In 1810, at age 23, George married Maria Lavall in Easton, PA. He then served in the War of 1812 and eventually moved north into what is now Paradise Township about 1822, along with other families (Boorem, Nauman, Wagner) from the same church in Hecktown, the Dryland Union Lutheran Church. George settled on land near the current Keokee Chapel to raise his family and had seven children: Hannah, Daniel, Peter Paul, Joseph, Michael, John Nicholas and Elizabeth (who married Joseph Boorem).

George's children Peter Dornblaser and his sister Elizabeth Dornblaser Boorem stayed in Paradise Township, while other siblings either moved away or died young.

Why should the Dornblaser family be remembered? The family donated the land to build a church and cemetery for the local community. In 1851, Paradise Methodist Episcopal Church (now Keokee Chapel) applied for incorporation, and it was so decreed. A small church was built in 1852 at a cost of \$400. George was then 65 years old and Peter was 38. This one act of allegiance to their community continues to impact the history of Paradise Township — through a continued connection with the church and burial ground, as well as expanding its significance through the current community park and the "Roof".



Keokee Chapel, c. 1907

George died in 1858 and was one of the first interments in the new cemetery. Peter followed him in 1903, the year after his 60th wedding anniversary.

The PHS archives contain a Stroudsburg newspaper

article dated November 1902 highlighting this anniversary, along with a photograph showing Peter, age 88, standing in front of the church at an "Old Folks" service.

PHS



A GROUP OF PARADISE TOWNSHIP'S OLD FOLKS.

Peter P. Dornblaser, who is today celebrating his 60th wedding anniversary, is the second man in the line at the right of the picture. The snap-shot is one taken by the Times at an "Old Folks" service several years ago.

See the entire newspaper clipping here:
<https://barrettlibrary.catalogaccess.com/archives/1687>

We thank the family for their contributions.
Are you a Dornblaser descendant? Please let us know!
Email paradisehistoricalgenealogy@gmail.com



All About THE ARCHIVES

Aaron Imbt, the Society's Archivist, has updated the PHS website, creating a separate tab for **Meeting Recordings**. Recordings of every meeting since January, 2012, are available to listen to online. A separate tab, **Artifacts**, takes you to information about physical materials in our collection — from tax records to postcards and photos to realia such as a complete original local baseball team uniform.

Aaron is also working diligently to add PHS archival records and images to the "Searchable History Online Collections" project at Barrett Paradise Friendly Library's website. Visit barrettlibrary.catalogaccess.com then click on **Advanced Search** in the menu on the left. Type "Paradise Historical Society" in the **Collection** field, and click the **Search** button to see our artifacts. New items are being added, so check back frequently!

The winter issue of the newsletter will include a full listing of PHS meeting subjects for your reference. Or go online now to www.paradisehistorical.org and click on the tab for **Meeting Recordings** to hear for yourself! **PHS**



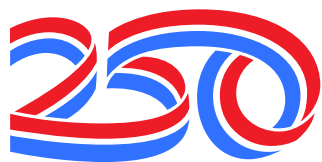
Talking About Meetings...

On November 2, 2025, Peter Gonze will share his research in a talk called **"The Story of Henryville."** Our December 14 meeting is a members-only event, **"Christmas at the Ace Store,"** hosted by Susan and Pat Newman, fifth-generation owners of this amazing piece of local history.

For next year, some of the subjects under discussion include a talk about the Dempewolf residence on Hunter Farm Road; a history of the early days of the National Drug Company, now Sanofi; memories of Memorytown, the iconic family resort on Grange Road; tales of life at Hunter Farm; evidence of the Lenape people in Paradise; and perhaps a "trunk show" full of trinkets and treasures whose use may be mystifying!

Reminder: Because the weather is often uncertain, we don't hold meetings in January, February and March. Some of our most interesting meeting topics are based on tales shared by members — memories of local families, jobs and businesses, farmsteads and houses, unusual objects and artifacts from the past, for example. Meetings are generally held at the Paradise Township Municipal Building, 5912 Paradise Valley Road (route 940) on the first Sunday of the month, at 2:00 p.m. All welcome! **PHS**

AMERICA **The Semiquincentennial of America's Declaration of Independence**



Continued from Page 1

You can find information on county events, or volunteer, at America250PA.org.

Our neighbors in Barrett Township (barretthistorical.org) have an extensive list of activities planned, including new displays at the Cresco Station Museum, a showing of the musical "1776" on March 20, 2026 and a talk by historian John L. Moore on the American Revolution in Pennsylvania on May 15, 2026. Both are free, and will take place at Barrett Paradise Friendly Library barrettlibrary.org.

Self-Evident Truths

Most every American knows that Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. Most can recite from memory those truly revolutionary words: ***"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."***

But did you know what Jefferson's draft actually said? ***"We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable; that all men are created equal & independant (sic), that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness."***

Jefferson's draft was revised and refined by a "committee of five," chosen by the Continental Congress on June 11, 1776. The committee consisted of Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston. Scholars believe that the ringing phrase "certain unalienable rights" was Franklin's. Even after the committee of five presented their document to the full Congress, further extensive changes were made before the members signed — putting their own lives, fortunes, and sacred honor on the line. **PHS**

Paradise Historical Society
P.O. Box 94
Henryville, PA 18332

Ways to Stay in Touch...

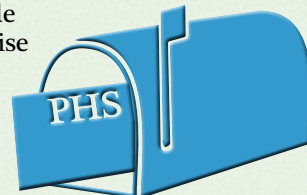
Has your email address changed recently? Or have you recently started using an email account? Please let us know the address! We send email reminders about meeting dates, times, locations and subjects, and would like to keep you in the loop.



Find us on 

Did you know PHS has a new and improved Facebook page? Search there for **"Paradise Township PA Historical Society"** and follow us! Join the discussion about images of people, places, and things old (and new) from Paradise Township. Details of upcoming meetings are also posted at our Facebook page.

One of the goals of PHS is to share interesting information about the people, places, and stories of Paradise Township. That's why we send this newsletter by U.S. Mail to most addresses in the Township — whether or not you are a member. If you move away, and still want to keep receiving the newsletter, it's easy to become a member! Just fill out the membership form below, and send it in with a check made out to Paradise Historical Society.



PHS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS:

John Bowman • Carole DePue • Jacqueline Magann

**Become a
Member
Today!**

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

Please help Paradise Historical Society collect, protect & share the interesting history of our area.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Student or Senior (65+) - \$10.00 | ☐ Family - \$25.00 |
| ☐ Individual - \$10.00 | ☐ Corporate - \$50.00 |
| ☐ Couple - \$20.00 | |

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to:
Paradise Historical Society,
P.O. Box 94, Henryville, PA 18332



Fall 2025

The Directors & Officers of
Paradise Historical Society are:

Patty Barrette Stein Secretary

Sandy Dietz Genealogist

Bruce Estell Treasurer

Peter Gonze

Carol Hillestad Editor

Aaron Imbt Archivist & Designer

Alfred Johnson President

John Layton Vice President

Laura Layton

Harold Metzgar Emeritus Officer

Newsletter design by

AARON G. IMBT design

agimbt.design@gmail.com