

# Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE

PARADISE  
Historical  
Society

SUMMER 2015 • Volume 9, Issue 2

## President's Letter

Perhaps every small town has its special people — “originals” who, because of their character, talent, or generous spirit, help shape the town's personality. My love for Paradise surely makes me prejudiced, but I believe that Paradise has more than its fair share of originals! Two of those special people are highlighted in this issue of Paradise Past. If you have memories to share of Edna Palmer Englehardt or Ruth Henry, we would love to hear about them.

Coming up on October 4 is a field trip with noted naturalist Don Miller to a recently conserved nature preserve just south of the Paradise border with Stroud Township. On November 1, Shirley Lansdowne will share her fascinating postcard collection. And on December 6, John and Laura Layton and Jeanne Layton again will welcome us to the Ace Store for a holiday open house.

Please join us for these interesting programs — and bring a friend!

Jane

Jane Niering, President

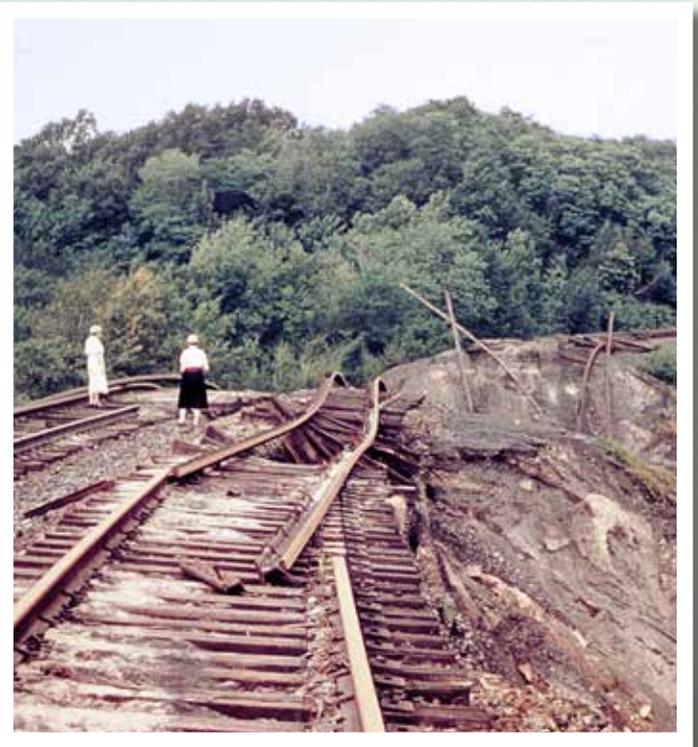
## DEVASTATION ON The Delaware

As this year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disastrous flood of 1955, your historical society began the year with an overview program on the flood in January and followed up with an in-depth discussion of causes and effects at our August meeting, which drew a standing-room-only crowd.

We were very fortunate to have Mary Shafer, author of *Devastation on the Delaware - Stories and Images of the Deadly Flood of 1955* give us a pictorial and first-person accounts of the tragic event. Mary is a trained meteorologist and shared the details of the “perfect storm” of events that led up to the disaster, which claimed so many lives August 18-20 in 1955.

A period of intense drought had suffocated our region that summer. Everything was bone dry. Then hurricane Connie hit the area on August 12-13, dumping up to five inches of rain, and saturating the super-dry earth. Five days later, Diane roared in,

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# Summer

COLLECTING, PRESERVING & DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

# DEVASTATION on The Delaware

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dumping more than 10 inches of rain onto the saturated ground, causing widespread, epic, flash flooding. Survivors recall the rain being like an open sluice gate pouring continuous sheets of water — for hours on end.

Some of the critical contributing causes of the flooding — and the dreadful losses — were:

- the railroad embankment at the Devil's Hole, which allowed tons of water to build

up behind it, before the force of the water burst through, carrying tons of debris and an churning sea of water downstream,

- dozens of small, two-foot dams constructed along the Paradise to provide good trout-fishing pools, each allowing a similar build-up, one after the other, growing monstrously as it roared past the Henryville House,

- and an inability on the part of many to believe that they were in danger, and who

delayed seeking high ground, until it was too late.

Mary Shafer interviewed many survivors of the flood for her book and had heart-breaking stories to tell. In the end, nearly a hundred people were dead, hundreds more were homeless, bridges and roads were destroyed, and life would never be quite the same in Monroe County.



## OUR HOUSE: Barbara & Walt Sollberger of PARADISE FALLS LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION

by Barbara Sollberger

The Sollberger cottage is a Montgomery Ward & Co./Gordon-Van Tine Wardway Ready-Cut cottage, advertised in their 1925 catalog as a Mackinac or Model 301. Built for the Fischer Family in 1926, the wood for the cottage was shipped by train from Davenport, Iowa, to Henryville, and assembled by a Quakertown-area builder on site. The stone for the foundation and patio were “cast-off” from previous quarrying activity behind the home.

Four families have enjoyed the views from this cottage since 1926. The current owner first visited the cottage in the 1950s, spending a wintry weekend with a Boy Scout troop camped out in the cottage, then owned by Charlie Jacobs. In 1988, the Sollberger Family had the opportunity to purchase the cottage and make it their summer home. A number of improvements have been made to the cottage, from roof windows that let in more light, to enlarging the main bathroom and updating the kitchen. Yet the original layout and many of the materials endure: a large family room/dining room with a cathedral ceiling and river-stone fireplace, upstairs bedrooms and bath accessed from a narrow balcony, a large screened-in porch and Dutch lap wood siding. Original bead board can be seen on the walls throughout the house, and exposed beams overhead support both the roof and some feathered friends!

Editor's Note:



*The Sollbergers kindly opened their beautiful home to Historical Society members during a visit to Paradise Falls Lutheran Association. “Our House” is an occasional feature of our newsletter. Why not tell us about your special house? Submissions welcome any time, or call 570 629-2727 to tell the newsletter editor all about it.*



# Everybody Loves Old Cars!

Old cars, great food, and the company of good friends — what more could you ask for on a summer Sunday? We had it all on July 12 this year at the PHS annual picnic meeting at the Roof in Paradise Valley.

Bruce Estelle and Cheryl Hagan expertly grilled hot dogs and hamburgers over the charcoal pit — and we all relished the results of their skill. Members brought delicious side dishes to share, from coleslaw, salad and beans to an array of scrumptious desserts. Lovers of history seem to be darn good cooks...

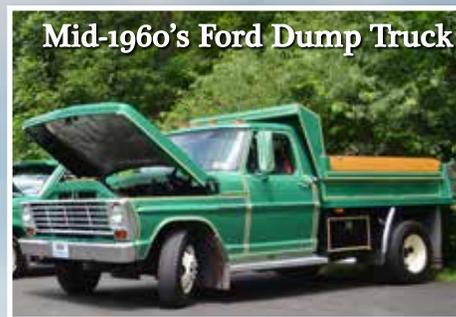
This year an antique car show was added to the agenda. Owners of approximately 14 cars and trucks showed off their spit-and-polish beauties. Trucks included the Barrett Township antique fire engine, driven by Roland Imbt. Another was an antique dump truck owned by Karl and Solweig Kerber — an “everyday drive” in marvelous condition.

For something truly unique, Harley and Don Collins brought a 1922 Worthington Mower tractor that was built using a

Model T Ford. You may recall from an earlier *Paradise Past*, Harley has studied the history of Worthington Mowers, a Stroudsburg company, and shared his extensive knowledge at a PHS meeting. Don offered guests to take the tractor for a spin.

Harold Metzgar brought three cars to the show, including a 1929 Nash that came from the Hawthorne Inn, which was located in Paradise Township. He also brought a Model A Ford Coupe that he picked up in pieces in a field and beautifully restored. His third car was a 1929 Roadster that belonged to his brother, also a Paradise Township original.

Other car and truck owners participating were Carl and Beth Reindl, Larry and Pat Paretta, Ron and Fern Bloss, Bruce Estelle and Cheryl Hagan, and Peter Sollberger. Pictures of their cars and trucks can be seen on the PHS website thanks to Kim Williams and his photography. Go to [www.paradisehistorical.org](http://www.paradisehistorical.org), and click on “Artifacts.” You’ll find photos and also a 9-minute audio.



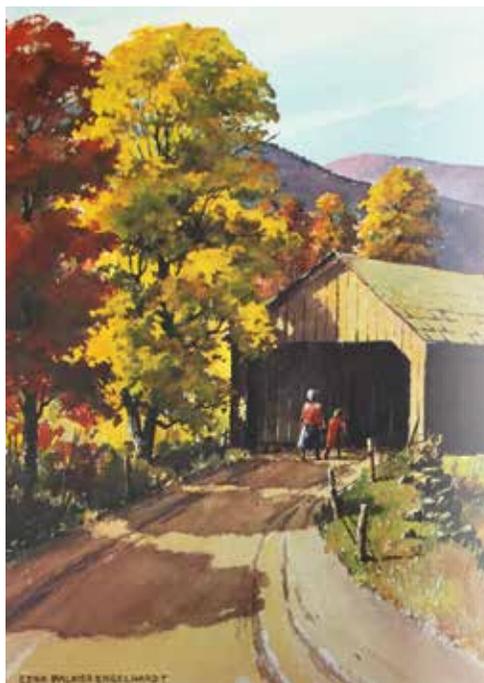
Mid-1960's Ford Dump Truck



1930 Model A  
Fruit & Vegetable  
Truck



Worthington Mower Tractor



## Edna Palmer Englehardt



One can't live in or visit Paradise Township for long without hearing about our famous artist, Edna Palmer Englehardt. PHS had a program about her in May and we found out a number of interesting things. Although we lay claim to Edna as a local, she was actually born in 1897 in Daleville, Chester County, PA. However, she moved to Paradise Township at an early age and grew up at the Farm on the Hill with three sisters who also became artists. Edna was best known for her paintings of winter scenes and farm scenes. Her night skies, with their hundreds of stars, capture a Pocono winter night beautifully. She took lessons from renowned artists of the National Academy of Artists including Cullen Yates, Harry Leith-Ross and John Carlson. The Navy commissioned Edna to do a painting for the *USS Pocono* command ship. She was also known for teaching here in the Poconos at the various resorts where she would lecture about her technique and then auction her painting as a door prize. She was a kind and generous teacher and neighbor, often offering a painting to a visitor in token of friendship.

Edna continued to work into her 80s and also pursued interests in wildlife, antiquing, sewing and cooking. At our meeting several members brought their own paintings done by Edna and shared their stories with us.

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

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Ruth shares a giggle with Harry Niering. Bruce Dunlap is in the background.

## A BELOVED *Paradise* ORIGINAL

Ruth Audrey Henry was born in December, 1928 and passed away on October 12, 2014. She lived most of her life in Paradise Valley, the daughter of William and Blanche (Besecker) Henry. She graduated from East Stroudsburg Normal School (now East Stroudsburg University), and obtained a master's degree from Penn State University.



Ruth & Orpah Besecker at a party for Ruth at Barrett Paradise Friendly Library, August 25, 2012

Following a few years of school teaching elsewhere in Pennsylvania she returned to Paradise and began a long career of teaching the children of our area. She taught for 6 years at the Paradise School on Upper Swiftwater Road.

In 1961 she began teaching at the Barrett Elementary Center where she completed her career as a teacher. Ruth remained active in community organizations including the Willing Workers of Paradise Valley. In 2010 Carol Hillestad recorded an interview with Ruth as part of the PHS effort to capture the history of Paradise one person at a time.

The recorded interview is available at the Paradise Historical Society Archives that are currently located in the Barrett Paradise Friendly Library, and at [www.paradisehistorical.org](http://www.paradisehistorical.org).

The directors and officers of Paradise Historical Society are

Ed Burns, Eleanor Burns, LeeAnne Dyson,  
Dan Hamblin, Carol Hillestad, Aaron Imbt,  
John Layton, Laura Layton,  
Harold Metzgar and Jane Niering.

*And We Welcome Our New Members:*

Ronald and Fern Blose  
Allison Breedveld and Family  
Charles Healey Donald Mader  
Garland Sexton and Diane Metzgar  
Ernestine Tinsley Janice Weidinger

**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+) - \$8.00     Family - \$25.00
- Individual - \$10.00     Corporate - \$50.00
- Couple - \$20.00     Sustaining - \$100.00

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**

Summer 2015