Paradise Past

The Newsletter of the Paradise Historical Society

Volume 44 • Fall 2026



President's Letter

As 2026 begins to wind down, it is a pleasure to reflect on our historical society's gatherings and outreach to the community. Fascinating meeting programs, a guided walk through Keokee Chapel Cemetery, the many thought-provoking events surrounding the 250th anniversary of our nation's world-altering Declaration of Independence — it's been a busy year!

This newsletter is an important way we engage with residents of Paradise Township. Even if getting to meetings and events just doesn't work for you, we hope you enjoy learning about the Township and its history in these pages. Our website **www.paradisehistorical.org** — is a great source for recorded talks from previous meetings and dates for future programs.

I hope you enjoy the beauties of fall in Paradise!

Al Johnson

Al Johnson, *President*

Celebrating AMERICA 250

by Sandy Dietz

Patriot Recognition Day, a joint project of Paradise and Barrett Historical Societies, was held July 12, 2026 at Barrett Administrative and Recreational Complex (BARC). It was the embodiment of all things patriotic! The event centered on local residents and their ancestors who signed allegiance and/or fought for the Revolution (Patriots).

In total, 94 Patriots and their 150 descendants were recognized in a ceremony wherein the descendant received a certificate and button.

The Color Guard of American Legion Evans-Blitz Post 922 and the Pledge of Allegiance began the festivities, along with a stirring performance by the Philly Fife and Drum Company.

Speakers included Marlene Dymond of the Jacob Stroud Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Bob May of the Valley Forge Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), and David Parker, Monroe County Commissioner and proud descendant of 2 Patriots.



The presentation of certificates followed, honoring Patriots from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Virginia and Delaware. Their descendants live in our area and submitted a form detailing their Patriot by name and their service during the Revolution.



Philly Fife and Drum Company



Jacob Stroud Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)

- **One family identified 17 Patriots of lineal descent.**
- **John Price, Sr., an early settler of the area, was represented by 36 descendants.**

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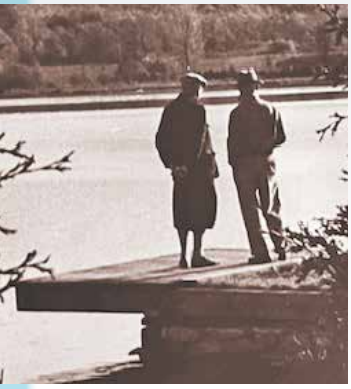
Fall

Collecting, Preserving, and Disseminating Paradise History

MEETING NOTES

A Very Special House: Building a Pocono Vacation Home in HENRYVILLE

At the September 2, 2026 meeting, Judy Dempewolff shared memories of her father, her family, and friends putting together a most unusual house. This is a summary of her remarks. The full transcript is available at www.paradisehistorical.org



The story of our family's house in the Poconos really began decades before my father built it.

Around 1912, a group of friends and neighbors from Nutley, New Jersey, formed the Mountain Crest Construction Company. They had long known the Poconos through deer hunting and envisioned creating a vacation community called Mountain Crest Colony near Henryville. Among them were Harry and Gus Hulbert, Boyd and Harry Muchmore, and Fred and Ronald Spinning.



My father's family became part of that story in the years before World War I. During the polio epidemic in New York City in 1916, families who could get away sent their children to the country. William T. Hunter, a relative of the Muchmores, learned about Mountain Crest and decided it would make a safe summer haven for his family. He told his friends, the Dempewolffs, about it, and they bought an adjoining lot. Harry Hulbert began building both houses in 1916; the Dempewolff house was ready by the summer of 1918.



My father and his siblings spent many happy summers there. He remembered traveling from New York on the D.L.&W. Railroad, in mahogany-paneled cars with green upholstered seats and brass chandeliers. Henryville was only a "flag stop": unless someone put out a red flag, the steam trains simply roared through. The children slept on screened porches listening to locomotives struggling up the mountain, along with whip-poor-wills, owls and katydids.



Life was very different then. Mothers commonly took their children "to the country" for the entire summer while fathers returned to New York to work, coming up by train on weekends. The women gathered each Thursday at the only telephone "on the hill," at Harry Hulbert's house, to call their husbands. Automobiles were still unusual, and even after Harry Hulbert acquired a Ford, the deep red Pocono mud could leave him stuck on the road.

By about 1950, however, the old family house had been sold. My father still wanted to spend summers in Henryville.

At the time he was Eastern Editor of *Popular Mechanics*, and there was great interest in the postwar housing shortage and in precut or manufactured houses that promised to make home-building faster and less expensive.

The magazine agreed to finance a model precut house. The idea was that an ordinary person could buy a complete package of precut lumber along with a book of detailed instructions and put the house together. The basic shell was estimated at $1,800, a summer cottage at $2,800, and a year-round version at $3,800.



There was just one problem: my father had never built a house.

Nevertheless, he became responsible for planning and building the model. He and my mother, Rita, looked at several possible sites and chose a wooded ridge with an extraordinary view of rolling oak- and hemlock-covered hills. At the time, Henryville was still a tiny, quiet settlement, with a general store, post office, gas station, the Henryville House, a little stone chapel and the old railroad station.



Before construction could begin, they needed a well. Finding water on a rocky ridge was no simple matter. My father sought advice from local farmers and eventually hired "Ike" Berger, an elderly well driller from Mount Pocono. Ike's rig was ancient, but he drilled down through the rock—and at about 85 feet struck a remarkable flow of 20 gallons a minute. "The water is under your foot," he explained. "You just got to drill to her."



For the actual construction, a local craftsman named Lew Bush was recommended. Nearly 73 years old, Lew had built houses and barns throughout the area for decades. He was independent, blunt and deeply skeptical of the unusual architectural plans my father brought him.

The house was designed for flexibility. Strong roof trusses would allow interior partitions to be placed wherever desired, making it possible to create different room arrangements. But Lew thought the lumber was too small and the huge roof headers were wasteful. Most of all, he distrusted the unfamiliar trusses. At one point their disagreement became so intense that Lew threw his tools into his car and announced that my father could finish the house himself.



That lasted only until my father tried to build a truss and smashed his thumb. Lew returned, took the hammer from him and demonstrated how it should be done. They went back to work.

Eventually, the trusses proved their worth. A neighbor found Lew actually jumping up and down on them to test their strength. They barely moved. Lew never again complained about the trusses—and went on to use them in three more buildings.

The construction took about six months. My mother worked alongside them, hauling water and stone and painting. At first Lew, a shy and old-fashioned man, would not speak directly to her. But after he caught her climbing a dangerously improvised scaffold, he built her a proper one and lectured her about safety. From then on they spoke directly, although he never quite managed to call her by her first name.

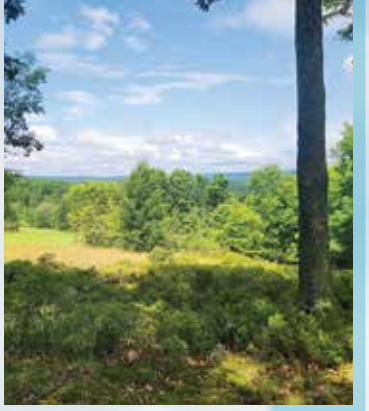
The most important moment came after the house was finished. One evening, when my father stopped at Lew's farm, Lew called after him as he left: "Stop by anytime—and respects to yer missus, Rita." The invitation, made in front of other local people, meant more than hospitality. It meant that the summer people had finally been accepted into the local community.

The house was completed in about six months. Over the years it evolved with the family: a sunroom and dining room were added, then a wing with a study and two-car garage, and finally a basement workshop, laundry and darkroom. It even served as a home for the family's daughter for a year.

What began as a postwar experiment in inexpensive, flexible housebuilding became something much more lasting: a family home rooted in the landscape and, just as importantly, in the people of the Pocono community. Decades later, it remains a treasured place—a house that grew and changed along with the family that built it.

If you have an idea for a program topic, please send an email to paradisehistorical@gmail.com

PHS







A GREAT DAY AT THE ROOF



Photo: Kim Williams

The 2026 edition of Paradise Community Day is in the books.

And a great day it was. Paradise Township has hosted this late-summer picnic at The Roof park for decades. The Township provides off-the-spit barbecued roast beef, beverages and dessert. Residents provide abundant side dishes from potato salad to noodle casserole to deviled eggs. Barry Nauman and friends provided great, danceable music this year. And, yes, the cake-walk tradition continues!

Supervisor Peter Gonze announced the Citizen of the Year for 2026 is Sandy Dietz, our own Paradise Historical Society Secretary. Her work and contributions to the Township's celebration of "America 250" were only part of the reason she was selected — Sandy is the kind of citizen who contributes day in and day out, quietly and without fanfare. Congratulations, Sandy, on this much-deserved honor! PHS

Celebrating AMERICA 250

by Sandy Dietz

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- **Many of the Patriots recognized fought with the Northampton County Militia.**
- **One Patriot was the 2nd person killed in the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775.**
- **One Patriot was a signer of the Declaration of Independence (North Carolina delegation).**
- **One Patriot was a part of George Washington's Culper Spy Ring. Robert Townsend (alias Samuel Culper, Jr.) was a New York City merchant who spied on British headquarters. A second Patriot was also identified as being a George Washington spy.**
- **One Patriot served through four separate enlistments and another served 7 enlistment periods — they were certainly dedicated to the fight!**
- **Many of the local Patriots were farmers.**
- **Some Patriots were or became important to Monroe County History: DePuy, Brodhead, Learn.**

The event really brought home a sense of how many everyday people — the forbears of our neighbors and friends — were willing to risk all in the cause of Liberty.

PHS



Descendants of Patriot Jacob Posten - Deb Porter, John Layton, and David Parker - who found they were related through this event.

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Paradise Historical Society
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Remembering DEPARTMENT STORES

Daniel Packer presented information to our membership at the October meeting regarding Regional Department Stores. He focused on The Globe (Scranton 1883-1994); Scranton Dry Goods / Oppenheims (Scranton 1912-1980) and AB Wyckoff (Stroudsburg 1875-early 1980s).

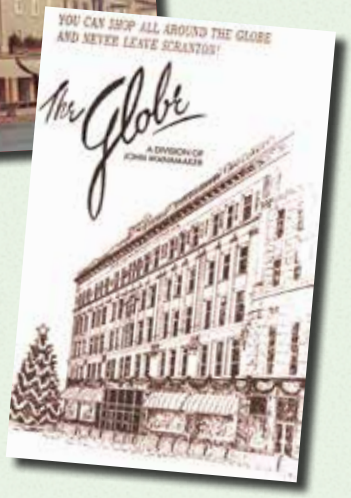
Unlike old-fashioned general stores, these stores allowed shoppers to browse merchandise, and were instrumental in women's rights. Women became part of the work force — and more independent as a result.

Major department stores provided shoppers a social, day-long event with the latest products and fashions, in-house restaurants, and hair salons along with free parking.

In 1974 Oppenheims opened a branch store in Mt. Pocono, but closed after four years. By this time the full-line department stores were declining due to suburban malls, mergers, a changing society, and the impression that downtowns were becoming less safe. Retail sales changed once again. PHS







Become a Member Today!

Your Membership Counts!

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

❑ NEW MEMBER
❑ RENEWAL

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

First Name:_____

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Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to:
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Fall 2026

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