

Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE

PARADISE



VOLUME 31 • Summer 2023

Historical
Society

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This issue of *Paradise Past* has suggestions on how to research your own family tree, an introduction to how the advent of the railroad transformed the landscape of Paradise, a sketch of Peter Gonze's talk about the Civilian Conservation Corps, and more. Please consider joining the Historical Society — a membership form is on the last page. And, whether you are a member or not, you are welcome to attend meetings! Check paradisehistorical.org for meeting details, and for access to extensive information about this beautiful place we call Paradise.

Jane Jane Niering, President



Do You Know the Story of the

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS?

Many younger Americans have never heard of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Peter Gonze said at our August 1, 2023 meeting. Yet between 1933 and 1941, the organization employed three million young men (and 8,500 young women), helped buffer many more millions of people from the starvation poverty of the Great Depression, and reforested America, planting 3.5 billion trees to combat soil erosion and forest fires, and to protect against future Dust Bowl disasters.

Fifteen hundred men served at Promised Land. They repaired dams, planted trees, and built roads, cabins, and shower houses. The Masker Museum, at the end of Pickerel Point Road in the Park, is dedicated to the CCC, and illustrates in moving detail the lives of the young men who lived and worked at the Park, among thousands of other CCC camps in every state.

Continued on Page 3



CCC Barracks at Promised Land

Summer

COLLECTING, PRESERVING
& DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

Close-to-Home Resources for Your Own Genealogical Research

BY SANDY DIETZ, GENEALOGY COMMITTEE CHAIR

Genealogical research is the backbone when compiling a family tree. There are two avenues of research that ultimately work together for the best results, especially with documentation: online searches and in-person research. The focus for this newsletter is in-person, local research, highlighting some local resources. This is by no means a complete list, but serves as a starting point. Please note that there are genealogical items of interest that you may not be able to access online — and knowledgeable people who can assist with your search through the following:

Public Libraries

- The Marxx Room at Easton Area Public Library
- Eastern Monroe Public Library - Local History and Genealogy Room (2nd floor)

University Library

- East Stroudsburg University library - and well as those in local proximity to places your ancestors lived.



MCHA Museum, Stroudsburg

Historical Societies/Associations

- Monroe County Historical Association, Main Street, Stroudsburg
- Paradise Historical Society
- Pike County Historical Society, Milford, PA (Paradise Township was once a part of Pike County)
- Pennsylvania Historical Society

Genealogical Libraries

- Scranton, PA: FamilySearch Center in Clarks Summit, PA
- Wilkes Barre, PA: FamilySearch Center in Trucksville, PA
- State Library of Pennsylvania: Harrisburg, PA

Government Buildings

- Monroe County Courthouse
- Pike County Courthouse

- National Archives, Philadelphia, PA

Additionally, don't forget the lineage societies. They often have information and genealogies provided by their members. Such organizations include the Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, The Mayflower Society, or the National Genealogical Society. Google search "lineage societies" for more.

Barrett Paradise Friendly Library houses the records of Paradise Historical Society, Barrett Township Historical Society, and Buck Hill Historical Society. These include complete copies of the *Buck Hill Breeze*, tax records for Paradise, and much more. A long-term project to scan these materials and make them available to keyword-search online is underway. More at <https://barrettlibrary.catalogaccess.com> or call the library at (570) 595-7171.

Enjoy your Search...
and Remember your Roots...

Sandy

"You live as long as you are remembered." — Russian Proverb

ParadiseHistorical.Genealogy@gmail.com

PHS

PARKSIDE CHAPEL Open for Summer Worship

Parkside Chapel is open for non-denominational worship every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. through September 24. You'll find a warm welcome and lovely music at this beautiful, historic Paradise landmark. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the building remains unchanged since 1893.

A special worship service will be held at 11:00 on September 10, 2023, to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the Chapel's founding. The Annual Hymn Sing will be held at 3:00 on September 24, 2023. Musicians and choir will be led by Gary Raish and Bob Riday. The public is welcome to come enjoy singing along with your favorite hymns. **PHS**

June Pot-Luck

Several dozen members brought salads, sides, stories — and antique vehicles — to our annual pot-luck picnic in June. **PHS**



Do You Know the Story of the *Continued from Page 1*

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS?

Recruits had to be between 18 and 25 years of age, come from a family that was on relief, and “have at least six teeth,” Peter said. The U.S. Army oversaw the program, which provided three meals a day — a blessing in itself in those days — clothing, medical care, training, and \$30 month. The work was hard and often dirty. But the food was described as “scrumptious,” and many new recruits gained 12 to 20 pounds in the first month.

The program ended as the country began preparing for war. But in the CCC, a generation of young people found purpose, learned a trade and the satisfaction of useful work, and made friendships that lasted for life.

Locally, Peter found evidence that the CCC planted evergreens on Hunter Farm property. You can listen to the full program at paradisehistorical.org [PHS](#)



Camp S 139 opens May 1933



The Masker Museum



Family Cabin - Bear Wallow

“THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS” IN PARADISE

Don Miller says he has lived on “the other side of the tracks” off Devils Hole Road since 1975. At our May 7, 2023 meeting, an enthusiastic group of about 25 people settled in lawn chairs and boulders, within sight of the railroad tracks at the Kurmes Preserve, to hear Don introduce us to this wilder side of Paradise.

The 400 acres of the Kurmes Preserve are protected from development by Pocono Heritage Land Trust. The Preserve also protects the waters of Yankee Run and Tank Creek, tributaries of the Paradise. A large vernal pool here is essential to amphibians like toads, frogs and salamanders during the spring and fall breeding seasons.

Don explained that building the railroad in the 1850s dramatically changed the land. “With an elevation change from 700 feet at Delaware Water Gap to 2,000 feet on the Pocono Plateau, the tracks had to swing out and around in a wide “C” to keep the incline at its two percent maximum.” That meant the railroad crossed hundreds of named and unnamed creeks. Culverts — to keep the water from running over or compromising the track bed — were time-consuming and expensive to build.

Just as the meeting started, a passenger-less “ghost train” put on a show.



PHOTOS BY KIM WILLIAMS

So, Don said, “the railroad ditched the sides of the tracks” to lead and concentrate the flow of water in just a few places, and built culverts only there.

Another landscape change was the enormous, 45-foot high railroad embankment that filled the valley of the Devils Hole Creek. Heavy trains laden with coal could travel the tracks, while Devils Hole Creek flowed through its culvert far below. Tragically, that very embankment blew out catastrophically in the Flood of 1955, carrying thousands of tons of debris, which caused death and destruction downstream.

Don led the group on an easy walk to the vernal pool, describing many of the trees, shrubs and other plants we saw along the way. Did you know that the fragrant trailing arbutus, found along the way, is technically our smallest shrub?

Don’s talk is in the archives at paradisehistorical.org. [PHS](#)

Don Miller drew a crowd on a warm spring day to learn about the Kurmes Preserve and the effects of the advent of the railroad in Paradise.


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Interested in Paradise History?

Check out our website paradisehistorical.org. You'll find downloadable copies of past newsletters, audios of dozens of subjects discussed at meetings (such as the story of the Hatchery told by Beth Martin, railroad history and mystery by Kim Williams, and life at "PMI in the Sky" remembered by Michael Fossa). Plus a list of many of the artifacts and publications in our archives. 

PHS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS:

Mildred Bauers & Karl Zeisler
Diane Carlton
Mimi & Randy DeHaven
Kale Drake
John & Teresa Fedish
Virginia Fields

Thomas Fry & Family
Sarah & Danny Hardy
Joan Merli
Stanley North III
Roy & Kristen Olson

Jane Hunter Smith
Flora Sullivan
Alex & Ann Marie Tasselmyer
Steve Woodward
Tom Woodward
Mrs. Garrie York-Sander

Become a
Member
Today!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

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

- | | |
|---|--|
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Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to:

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

The Directors & Officers of
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