

# Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE

PARADISE



VOLUME 29 • WINTER 2023



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

## Historical Society

Our committee to focus on genealogy was formed with the leadership of Sandy Dietz. The mission is to connect our history with the people who lived it, providing information and encouraging families to research their own roots. The Genealogy Committee is also a way for our members to share gathered information for the benefit of members and residents — as well as future generations. In addition to expanding our existing archives, interesting genealogical information will be published in future PHS newsletters. If you would like to take part in the committee, or would like to share genealogical information you have collected, please contact the committee at [ParadiseHistorical.Genealogy@gmail.com](mailto:ParadiseHistorical.Genealogy@gmail.com). See below for our first article — of many, we hope! — with a genealogical twist!

Jane Jane Niering, *President*

# How a Little CURIOSITY & Online Research Solved a MYSTERY DATE

John Layton recently found an old playbill for a production of a play called “Dan Wetherby’s Prize” that was staged at Swiftwater M.E. Church. The playbill indicated that this occurred on Saturday, April 17, but the year was missing...

Was it possible to deduce the date and solve the MYSTERY?

Online research indicated that the play was about 2 hours long, written by Willis N. Bugbee and originally published in 1914. The playbill named the local cast members. In researching those names, discoveries were made about their dates and relationships. For example, some of the cast members were siblings.

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The playbill that launched a puzzle to determine the year of the performance.



COLLECTING,  
PRESERVING  
& DISSEMINATING  
PARADISE HISTORY

Winter

# CHRISTMAS AT THE ACE STORE 2022



The first snowstorm of the season made for messy driving, but an exceptional crowd of intrepid members attended the December 2022 holiday party at the Ace Store. Our hosts were Susan and Patrick Newman, the fifth generation of the family to own the property.

John and Laura Layton — the fourth generation custodians of this local treasure — were also on hand.

Following are notes from John's remarks.

"Susan and Pat have undertaken another renovation to The Ace Store and The East Swiftwater property. Electrical outlets, insulation and heat were added in bedrooms. Construction of the store and house occurred between 1890 and 1893. We found kraft paper under the clapboard, dated June 28, 1893, signed by Elmer McNeilly, Tannersville, PA. In 1959, 63 years ago, aluminum siding was added, over the clapboard.

To insulate the structure, access was needed to the attic floor. That job principally fell on Laura and John. Laura and I set about removing excess material from the attic.

Wooden boxes containing damaged vintage clothing were found. There was also brand "new" old stock from the store that had not been sold when the styles changed.

The finds in the attic were an opening into the lives of my ancestors as well as glimpses into their friends and lifestyles of the late 1800s

through the early 1900s. For instance...

We found **BED FRAMES AND SPRINGS** built so that people could sleep in the attic, where there is little headroom.

**THE GEM** There was a vast collection of jars, bottles, and cans. Mason-type jars were plentiful as were beverage bottles. We have not removed all the jars yet. One is unique, it is entitled THE GEM Patented June 29, 1869. With an original patent date of Nov. 26, 1867. A search of the internet has not revealed one with the same markings. They appear to have been made more recently in Canada for a short period of time.



**LIMPING LIZZIE** We have a candidate for the Antiques Roadshow, although it is missing the box. The "Limping Lizzie" was a wind-up toy car, produced by the Louis Marx & Company. It could have been made between 1919 and 1927. I have conflicting information on when it was

made. One source says it was only made in 1927. It appears to have been sold by Sears and Roebuck for 25 cents. Ours may have been made closer to 1927 since Miles Carlton was born in 1916 and could have been the recipient of it.

**RADIO WORLD 1932** There were scads of old magazines including those related to early radio and ham radio operation. Miles Carlton, the grandson of John M. Ace was interested in electricity at an early age and was an accomplished ham radio operator while still in school. He later became friends with Henry Heise, another ham radio enthusiast, who married Audrey Hamblin and lived on Horse-shoe Drive.

**PRAM** Now for the mystery. What is the story of the wicker baby pram or stroller? I have not found any reliable documentation on the history of it or the manufacture. There are a couple of items on eBay that look like ours. They have the two-wheel configuration and the anti-roll over casters in the back as well as the pull handle. Those on eBay are described as doll strollers or prams. There is no indication of age or manufacture. We have tried to figure out who in the family may have been a user of this pram. Jeanne Carlton was born in 1920, so if it is a dolls buggy would her age be correct for such an item? Is it possible that it was used for a child (Miles was born in 1916). Births earlier than

that were in 1888 and earlier. So, the mystery continues.



Lastly, **JOHN M. ACE DIARIES FROM 1875 THROUGH 1879** He was 23 years old when he started these diaries. He married in November 1879, and we have not found any diaries of his since then. They tell an interesting story of the life of a young bachelor in Monroe County. He refers to many folks' ancestors who are still in the area, including names like Kistler, Werkheiser, Metzgar, Arndt and others. He also refers to towns like Fennersville, Houserville and Knippsville."

**D**elicious party foods filled tables in the kitchen and dining room. Offerings included lime sherbet punch, deviled eggs, shrimp and cheese dishes, cakes and of course, cookies — some so beautifully decorated that people thought they were store-bought. (They weren't!)

John also shared a story about Gina, a member who lives in Brooklyn and now owns her family's summer house on Horseshoe Drive. Gina attended the party. He said, "while growing up she and her family were frequent visitors to the store. Gina also was friends with my sister and hence had access to the house and piano. My grandmother would let her play the piano, which further establishes the nature of the relationship. I had not seen her in decades and she had not been in the store since it closed in 1972. Returning was an emotional moment for her. Susan filled up a small bag with candy from the case, as my grandmother would have done for her. It was over the top." **PHS**



The dining room is little changed from when it once hosted tourists from far and wide.



The store is a favored gathering spot during the holiday meeting.

## How a Little **CURIOSITY** & Online Research **Solved a MYSTERY DATE**

*Continued from Page 1*

Focus then went to the female names – when did they marry and change their last name? When did they have their first child?

*The clues...*

Edna Bogert offered a clue: she was married between 1910 and 1918, according to the US Census, and had her first child in 1918, so the play was before 1918.

Carrie Dunlap provided another clue. She was born in 1894, married and had her first son Clifford Smith in January 1918 (US Census). Although a marriage certificate has not been found to date, counting back from Clifford's birth, Carrie's marriage date was probably in or before April of 1917. So the play was before April, 1917.

This narrowed the time frame down to the three years between 1914 and 1917 – but we still didn't have the mystery year.

Knowing that the day of the performance was April 17, and that it was on a *Saturday* offered the final clue. Calendars for the years 1914 – 1917 showed only seven times during those years when a Saturday fell on the 17th:

January 1914	October 1914
April 1915	July 1915
February 1917	June 1916
	March 1917

Mystery solved (with a little help from genealogy)! We can confidently say that the production of "Dan Wetherby's Prize" was April 17, 1915.

*Thanks to the Genealogy Committee for sharing this puzzle – and its solution!*

**ParadiseHistorical.Genealogy@gmail.com**

*"We are braver and wiser  
because they existed,  
those strong women and strong men...  
We are who we are because they were who they  
were. It's wise to know where you come from,  
who called your name."*

**PHS**

— *Maya Angelou*

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# Did You Know? Every issue of *Paradise Past* is Online

The full collection of PHS newsletters going back to Spring of 2013 can be found on our website [www.paradisehistorical.org](http://www.paradisehistorical.org). They're easy to find on the home page, on the right side right below the current issue. Just click on an issue date, and the newsletter opens in a new window. You can download and save the newsletter file as a PDF, and share it with friends or family, too. With this Winter 2022-23 issue of *Paradise Past*, we start our eleventh year of publishing the newsletter. From the beginning, the newsletter has been mailed to every household address in Paradise Township. If you enjoy learning about the Township's history, why not become a member? See the membership form below. And, thank you for reading! [PHS](#)



**PHS WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS:** Robert MacDonald • Beck Family  
Bob & Marcia Bell • Steve Woodward • Charles Feminella • Gabriel Smolarz



## YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

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

- Student or Senior (65+) - \$8.00
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Winter 2023

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