



HERITAGE HERALD

Slate Belt Heritage Center Newsletter

September 2010

Portland rich with history

Portland shares a spot in American History with the famous walking purchase and once was the site of the longest covered bridge in the country.

These and other points of interest were discussed in an interesting presentation by Portland resident Walter Emery at the Slate Belt Heritage center August 12.

Edward, Emery said, was the only man among three who began a project to claim as much land in Eastern Pennsylvania as possible in a walk that took 36 hours. Since the Native Americans believed a man could only walk about 40 miles in that period of time, they agreed to the walking purchase. When it was done, however, Marshall had claimed parts of several counties including Bucks, Lehigh, Carbon,



Schuykill, Northampton and Monroe.

“He probably ran,” said Emery. “And he was the only one to make it.”

For his work, Marshall was supposed to receive 500 acres of land from the sons of William Penn, but when they reneged on that promise, Marshall moved to “Mount Bethel Township” and what is now known as Portland in 1752. After raids by Native Americans

claimed the lives of his wife and son, Marshall left the area about five years later. Portland, nonetheless, was on the map, and with its proximity to the Delaware River, the community began to grow and prosper.

“Portland is one of the oldest towns

See *PORTLAND* page 4

Cole tells about opera house and blouse industry

Walter Cole recently spoke on Correll’s Opera House and the local blouse industry.

The opera house located on South Main Street in Pen Argyl was built for the Correll family business and opened in 1886 for its first performance. It was used three or four times a week for traveling theatre companies, church groups and social clubs.

For a mere 5 cents one could climb to the third floor, up a series of steps, and be thoroughly entertained. Social clubs like the “Elite Club” held their annual minstral there.

The first floor housed the family hardware store where hand-written ledgers still exist to substantiate the business. The second floor was the living quarters for the Correll family.

In 1890, a promanent event was held with the showing of the “Edison” phonograph. The opera house continued to operate until 1916 when the state

See *COLE* page 3

Wain awarded Angelo Polo Scholarship

Recent Bangor Area High School graduate Stephanie Wain was awarded the Angelo Polo scholarship in the amount of \$500 presented to her at a ceremony held at the Slate Belt Heritage center August 12.

The scholarship honors Polo who worked tirelessly to support the Bangor Community and school district. Wain needed to submit a three-page essay explaining her community service participation and how that reflected the example set by Polo.

Wain developed the “Have a Heart Campaign,” at Bangor High School to embrace all students at risk by involving their peers and classmates. She

wanted to get the message across to all students that their peers can and will support them by guiding them to helpful resources. If students know of friends or peers who are distressed, they are encouraged to talk to them, tell an adult, and/or steer them to a guidance counselor or teacher. The emphasis is to care enough to get involved and not just “walk away.”

Her project was inspired by the tragic suicide of a fellow student at Bangor High School. It began as just a pledge to care for another peer by being aware and acting on any apparent concerns. It evolved into getting student

See *Wain* page 4

**SLATE BELT
HERITAGE CENTER**

**30 NORTH FIRST ST.
BANGOR, PA 18013
610-588-8615**

WEB:
slatebeltheritage.com

E-MAIL:
theklbs@epix.net

**OPEN
SAT/SUN- 12-3**

Kim Bray Interns at Heritage Center

Kim Bray, daughter of Robert and Patti Bray of Bangor, completed her summer internship program at the Slate Belt Heritage Center. Ms. Bray is a third year student at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Va. She is studying anthropology and received three credits for her internship at the Center. The program provided a general overview of museum work. After a brief training period, Kim helped to organize storage areas, identify artifacts and register them in the Past Perfect cataloging system, and clean and house them in archival boxes. She completed cataloging a collection of records relating to the construction of the Heritage Center as a town hall.

She also helped produce, "That's Entertainment," an exhibit about the performing arts in the Slate Belt. This entailed selecting materials, writing labels, processing loans, laying out display cases and installing the artifacts. It took some heavy lifting, especially when she helped retrieve a set of Strand Movie Theater seats from the borough offices in the old Bee Hive building. "It was fun, but a lot of work," said Kim. In addition to the scheduled activities, she discovered pictures of family mem-



Kim Bray (L) finished her internship with The Slate Belt Heritage Center. She worked under the supervision of Melissa Hough.
Photo Courtesy of Ernie Dietz

bers in the group photos of the Apollo Chorus and in the Homefront display. The Bray family has lived in Bangor and operated Bray's News Agency for several generations. Kim also learned to give tours, participated in the Center's long range planning process, and exceeded her required 150 hours of work

at the Center. Retired curator Melissa Hough, supervised the internship program.

The Slate Belt Heritage Center is located at 39 North 1st Street, Bangor, Pa., and is open to the public Saturdays and Sundays, 12-3 p.m., April through October, and by appointment.

That's Entertainment Now On Display at SBHC

"That's Entertainment: A Salute to Slate Belt Performers" is now showing at the Slate Belt Heritage Center. From bands to bugle corps, vaudeville to variety shows, the exhibit highlights the groups, soloists, and talented leaders who wowed local and national audiences over the past 125 years. The exhibit will run to November 14, 2010.

Costumes, uniforms, musical instruments, programs, and lots of photographs tell the story of Slate Belt performers. Over twenty-five lenders generously shared memorabilia and memories, and together with the Heritage Center collection, there is an impressive display of more than 100 artifacts.

The show traces performers in local "opera houses" during the Vaudeville era and the Apollo Chorus of the

mid-twentieth century to the Elks Chorus and the New Approach, both of which celebrated anniversaries this year. Vintage recordings form an audio portion of the exhibit.

See a miniature parade of uniforms from the Roseto Cornet, the Pen Argyl, and East Bangor Bands and the award winning Yellow Jackets Drum and Bugle Corps, complete with drum major's baton and vintage instruments.

Costumes and photos demonstrate how old time minstrel and variety shows lived on in the Bee Hive Happening and extravaganzas produced by a host of organizations from the ILGWU to the Mighty Methodist Art Players. Ballet shoes and programs are a reminder of the impact that Johnnie Gruver and her School of the Dance had on a genera-

tion of people in the 1950s and '60s.

The exhibit highlights individual professionals like Gina Viglione and Jayne Mansfield, bands like Bernie Parson's and Ronnie and the Revelations, and a surprising list of performers who had starring moments, if not full-time careers, in the performing arts.

The Slate Belt Heritage Center is located at 39 North 1st Street, Bangor and is open 12-3 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday through October and by appointment.

On Sunday, October 3rd, between 12-3 pm the public is invited to an afternoon of entertainment by members of the Elks Chorus and the New Approach. The Heritage Center requests for a \$3.00 donation to defray costs of the refreshments.

See Photos Page 5

National Welsh Assembly Exhibit



Photo courtesy of Ernie Dietz.

Coming to The Heritage Center

Jodi Pysher will present “Bangor Then and Now” October 14 at the Heritage Center and Russ Stout will speak on Lewis and Clark on November 14.

Penkernewek Holiday Tea

The Pennsylvania Cornwall Association – Penkernewek, sponsors of the Cornish Room at SBHC will host a Holiday Tea 2 pm Saturday, November 13 in the social room of Grace United Methodist Church, 404 E. Mountain Ave., Pen Argyl.

The doors will open at 1 P.M. Reservations are required and are \$15 per person. Three courses will be served. For reservations contact Lou Bray 610-588-3745 or Harry Bray 610-863-9537. Reservations limited to 100 persons.

Pennsylvania Needs Online Death Records

There is an attempt to get Pennsylvania state death certificates that are at least 50 years old (currently that means from 1906-1959) to become open records and available online similar to 14 other states. For nearly 30 other states there are no death records online. Many of you have experienced the frustration of having to provide information about the deceased and have been unable to do so. These restrictions are true for all Pennsylvania state death certificates regardless of how long ago the person died.

You are urged to contact Pennsylvania state officials, in writing or in person, since it will have the most impact, but at least by phone or e-mail to express your concern.

If you have any questions please contact the spokesperson for PaHR-Access: Tim Gruber 610-791-9294 or timarg@rcn.com.

COLE cont. from page 1

condemned usage of the third floor as a public theatre because the capacity did not support crowds sometimes numbering 200 visitors. The late Mary Ellen Correll noted that the building “held many great memories of a kinder, gentler era”.

Cole then showed a film taken of the former Valerie Fashions garment business. A factory demonstration explained the production of a shirt from the onset in the cutting room to the finished product. The business started in 1958 with 17 employees and grew to 1500.

In 1991, the business, owned by the Dell`Alba family, closed its doors as did the more than 80 blouse mills throughout the Slate Belt. Cheaper labor and overseas production forced this once prolific industry’s cessation. The vacancy of the textile and garment factories has left the area without a solid tax base.

LOCAL HISTORICAL SITES

Hunter-Martin Settlement... Rt. 611, Martins Creek

Slate Belt Museum... 2214 N Delaware Dr, Mount Bethel. Sat/Sun 1-5 Memorial Day to Last Sunday in September. 570-897-6181.

Edelman's School.... Route 191, Belfast. Third Sunday May-October.

Jacobsburg Historical Society.... 402 Henry Rd, Nazareth, PA. 610-759-9029. M-F 9-5. e-mail: jacobsburg@rcn.com.

Weona Park Carousel.... Rt. 512, Pen Argyl

Ross Common Manor... Rt. 115 Saylorsburg

Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm.... 1000 Turkey Hill Rd, Stroudsburg. 570-992-6161. e-mail: farm@quietvalley.org. Open June 19 thru Labor Day.

Moravian Historical Society.... 214 E Center St, Nazareth. 610) 759-2461. e-mail: info@moravianhistoricalsociety.org Open 7 Days 1-4.

Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum.... 402 Henry Rd, Nazareth. 610-759-9029 Sat/Sun 11-4 May thru Oct.

National Canal Museum at Two Rivers Landing.... 30 Centre Square Easton. (610) 559-6613

Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society.... 107 S 4th St, Easton, Pa. 610-253-1222.

Antoine Dutot Museum & Gallery.... 24 Main St, Delaware Water Gap, Pa 570-476-4240. Sat/Sun 1-5.

Monroe County Historical Association.... 900 Main St, Stroudsburg, Pa. 570-421-7703. Tues-Fri 9-4.

Portland cont. from page 1

in the area because of the river," Emery said.

Later, a covered bridge was built to span the Delaware and was the longest of its kind in the country, spanning 775 feet before it was washed away in the devastating flood of 1955.

Construction of the covered bridge began in 1816, but for a variety of reasons, wasn't completed until 1869. It was the main conduit connecting Pennsylvania and New Jersey until 1914 when, what is the current toll bridge, was constructed.

Two major Ferries operated on the river known as Dills Ferry (the original name of Portland) and Myers Ferry. Dills Ferry ceased operation upon completion of the covered bridge, while Myers Ferry remained until World War I. The ferries carried wagons, and other goods to and from New Jersey.

Logging also played a major role in

the early economy of the area. With an abundance of Hemlock trees and the proximity to the river for transport, logging thrived. People then came to the area, giving rise to hotels and taverns.

Hemlock was also in Fulmer's Tannery which used the bark to make tanning fluid. Vats of tanning fluid were common around the tannery and often left uncovered.

"If you came home late at night you had to watch where you were going," Emery said. "Otherwise you could fall into one of the vats."

Later, the Slate industry provided a boost to the Portland economy. No less than a dozen quarries were located near Portland and Slateford just to the north. With the growth of Bangor and Pen Argyl, it then became feasible to build the Bangor-Portland railway in 1879.

Portland also was the home of a limestone quarry, and lime kilns, but the lime was used in agriculture not cement. The kilns were destroyed in the 1940s when a nearby creek was relocated.

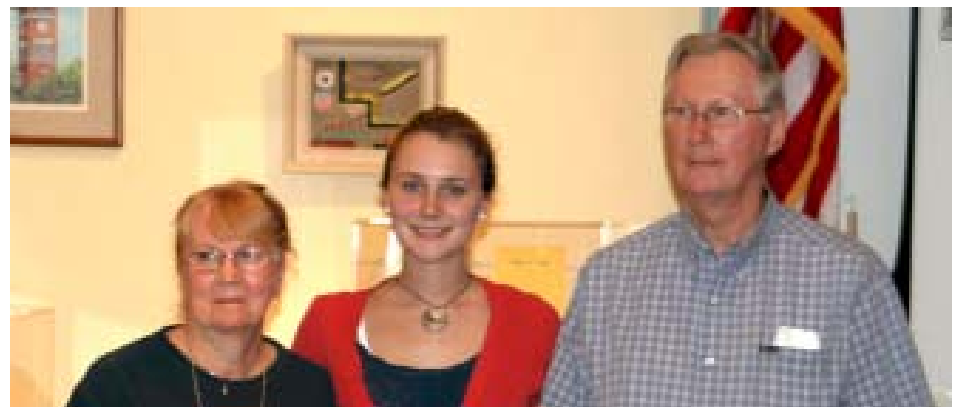
Wain cont. from page 1

activities and clubs to develop awareness presentations of social issues that students face. Its mission is to reach out to any student who is struggling with personal issues and urge them to seek assistance. Students have a responsibility for each other's well being. One way to demonstrate this is to create an awareness of social issues prevalent in school. This student-driven initiative shows the concern, commitment, and pride that students have in their school. The result creates not just an awareness, but unity. Working together as a team, she

says, can overcome adversity.

She is also very community minded and organized a group of volunteers to assist those affected by the 2008 tornado that ripped through Cherry Valley, PA.

At Bangor she graduated in the top six per cent of her class. She was involved in school activities which included varsity soccer, varsity tennis, the high school musical (a Freddy Award nominee), Leo Club, Art Honors Society, head anchor on the morning announcements, finalist for the PA Governor's School of Art, a member of the BHS Select Choir, and an editor of the school newspaper.



Pictured are (L-R) Sarah Polo, Wain, and Lou Bray

Civil War more than guns and ammo

When one envisions the Civil War, or any war, the thoughts of weapons and battles come to mind. But as the Civil War Encampment re-enactment at the recent Slate Belt Heritage Days demonstrates - there is much more.

The simulated camp, temporarily located on Fourth Street in Bangor on the site of the former Bangor High School, consisted of three tents, each depicting a different phase of the war effort.

Patricia Steinmetz of Stockertown, portrayed the role of a "seamstress-tailorette," and despite the 95-degree heat, was dressed in clothing of that era.

Although she played the role of a sole proprietor, she and others like her, were extremely helpful in keeping the soldiers in proper uniform because major manufacturers couldn't always match supply with demand.

"I would have my own shop and they would subcontract to the local people," Patricia Steinmetz said. "The ladies would work to earn money.... and make uniforms for the war effort."

Assisting Steinmetz was her husband, Warren, who played the role of First Lieutenant with the

Engineers and Terry Koch who was also a nurse.

A few yards away, Ray Steinmetz, son of Patricia and Warren, played the part of Chief Engineer of the Second Corps.

"The Engineers were your construction workers of the army, said Ray Steinmetz. "We would build roads, build bridges, build fortifications and we would destroy roads, destroy bridges and destroy fortifications."

The engineers worked in concert with the army. They needed to know where the army was going and what it was going to do. Using those plans the engineers prepared the way.

Steinmetz in his role as Chief Engineer said he had to plan the work and assign men to complete it.

One of their projects was the construction of a cheval de frise. His sample scaled down model he demonstrated was actually about 10-foot wide and six-foot long and consisted of tree branches carved to form a four-pointed structure with spear-like edges. These were used to block roadways and bridges.

Medics also played a major function in the war effort. Wayne Smith was cast in the role of a surgeon carrying the rank of major

and was assisted by Ian Noll who was a hospital steward.

"The surgeon ... would run the department," Smith said. "I would do most of the surgery."

Problem was - medics were sometimes in short supply. "If I was the only surgeon I would have to treat three or four hundred men," Smith said.

Noll's job of Steward made him, according to Smith, "a jack of all trades."

"The steward was in charge of the medication and acted as a pharmacist," said Smith. "He also was the only person allowed to carry a side arm."

The steward was in charge of the "booze," morphine and opium. And when he didn't have anything else to do - he took care of all paper work and weather reports."

Said Smith, "Today, we'd call him an administrator."

During battle, the medics stayed a mile or so behind the front lines and out of firing range. Still, they were not completely out of harm's way because the confederates would try to raid the medics headquarters to get supplies they couldn't get by normal means because of the blockade.

That's Entertainment Photos



Slate Belt TOWN TOPICS

DAILY NEWS UPDATES - EVENT CALENDAR - SPORTS - MORE

The Slate Belt's
First and Only
**ONLINE DAILY
NEWSPAPER**

sbttopics.com

P.O. Box 82, Pen Argyl, PA 18072
Voice &Text: 570-688-3724. E-mail: sbtopics@rcn.com

HERITAGE HERALD

Slate Belt Heritage Center Newsletter
September 2010

**Slate Belt Heritage Center
30 N. First St.
Bangor, PA 18013**