



Good Purpose

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OLD SCHOOL IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

By Del Smith

The Baltzer Meyer Center operates in a former church directly across from a one-roomed school, built in 1881 as Harrold Number 8, and kept going by an all-volunteer group.

Settlers, mostly German and Scandinavian came here early, squatters really, before British subjects had the natives' permission to set down roots on the large chunk of land claimed later by Virginia, Maryland, and later the Scots Irish folk who had settled first east of the Allegheny Mountains.

These early settlers constructed homes, cleared wooded areas, and worked farms much as their ancestors had done in eastern Pennsylvania and Europe before that. Most of us learned some version of the above story in school, a school that seemed normal to us because it, like other institutions, was a part of our community. The people offered to pay for a religious teacher to lead them on Sundays, and to teach their children for a few months each year, often in the same building.

Baltzer Meyer became that teacher for at least a decade in a wooden school/church building close to where the center sits now. Baltzer Meyer was not ordained but he educated children and led religious services in the area until the people could call an ordained minister. That time would come once the wars between France and Britain ceased in this area, and the first people had been pushed away.

BMHS ELECTION 2024

By Lydia Greenberg

You probably expected this newsletter to come with a ballot for our society's yearly election. We are delighted to announce that this is not the case. As all of our candidates ran unopposed, our board of directors deemed a formal election unnecessary. We thank you for your continued support -- stay tuned for a brand new new year full of exciting and informative programs!

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS!

If you are interested in becoming a corporate sponsor, please visit our website for full information.

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RING RING!

By Lydia Greenberg
 Photo By Franny Petras

Don't get too *hung up* on our Harrold Hall displays; join the *party line* and come upstairs to *ring in* our new display in the archives! We're hoping this telephone collection is well-*received* by our visitors.

Have you used any of these types of phones? Do you still have a landline, or have you cut the cord? Was your first cell phone a massive brick? Do you miss spinning the number dial, or are you a fan of modern touchscreens? Feel free to reminisce on our Facebook page or come see our collection during one of our programs!

DIGITIZING UPDATE

By Del Smith and Nick Kayhart

The Digital Department workers are completing the first set of materials lent us by the Greensburg Civic Theater from the theater groups founding about 1950-1951 through 1966-1967. The group of scrapbooks contained playbills and cast pictures as well as pictures of the sets at the different venues, and newspaper articles concerning the plays. This writer recognized a few people (Angelo Sembiante, a versatile actor for many years) and Andrew Zahratka, a Greensburg-Salem teacher. We are completing the digital storage of the completed work and plan to return the scrapbooks and digitized copies to the Civic Theater group.

We are excited to be saving letters home from the Philippines written (sometimes in pencil) from John Cribbs to his father during 1898-1899, reporting as a serviceman in the Spanish-American War. The pages varied in size and texture, possibly John Cribbs using what was available, some letters having been written on military stationery emblazoned with a picture of the USS Maine and the slogan, "Remember the Maine" as part of the letterhead. The historical society is grateful to Glenn Smeltzer for having donated the letters.

The digital committee meets on Wednesday evenings at the Baltzer Meyer center to scan and archive items of historical significance especially to southwestern Pennsylvania.

GENEALOGY LIBRARY HOURS

The 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month are the only days Lori is scheduled to be on site 10am-2pm, weather permitting.

Wednesdays 6pm-8pm
Thursdays 10am-2pm



BURIAL GROUND, GRAVEYARD, OR CEMETERY?

By Rob Myers

These terms used to describe three similar yet independently unique locations. Today, cemetery is the catch-all term that is commonly used. Think of it as how some people use the word coke to indicate any fountain drink, not necessarily a Coca-Cola.

The Noah Webster 1828 dictionary defines a cemetery as a place where the dead bodies of human beings are buried. Let's modernize that a bit by saying a cemetery is a designated area where human remains are laid to rest by way of burial, entombment, interment, inurnment, or scattering.

Here are a few samples of the etymology of the word cemetery. From Sanskrit *śete*: he lies; from Greek *koimētērion*: sleeping place; from Latin *coemeterium*: resting place. The Anglo-French term would have been *cimiterie*, and the Middle English term would have been *cimitery*.

A few other terms and their meanings are:

Burial Ground: This is often a small or primitive cemetery. This term is sometimes used to indicate the cemetery containing the remains of Native Americans.

Graveyard: A cemetery associated with a church. They can directly adjoin the church or be on land that the church owns. These will occasionally be referred to as Churchyards when directly adjoining the church.

Frontier/Pioneer Cemetery: Often envisioned as a small prairie cemetery where towns were trying to be established. A Frontier cemetery can also be a single grave where a person died while migrating westward. We must remember that Western Pennsylvania was the frontier at one point.

Domestic/Family Cemetery: Usually a small cemetery located on private property (typically a farm). Generally everyone buried there is related.

Town/City Cemetery: Usually located on the edge of town, but sometimes within the town due to urban sprawl. This is a public cemetery maintained by the town.

Rural Cemetery: Located outside of the city limits and designed to have more of a garden feel to them. They were designed with curved drives, and incorporated more trees. Families owned plots, and they could arrange their individual burial lots as they desired.

Lawn Park Cemetery: They implemented more uniformity in how the lots were to be arranged within the family plots. They also decreased the number of trees to create the appearance of an open lawn.

Memorial Parks: These were designed for ease of maintenance. Large family monuments are the exception, if allowed at all. The uniform standard are the flat turf markers.

National/Military Cemeteries: Originally established for casualties of war. They are now designed for military veterans and their spouses.

Fraternal/Lodge Cemeteries: One must have been a member of the fraternal organization to be buried there.

Potter's Field: Established for those who could not afford a proper burial, could not be identified, or whose remains were unclaimed. Generally these were associated with County Farms (poor houses) prisons, state hospitals, and psychiatric institutions.

Green Cemeteries: No vaults, coffins, or embalming fluids. Some allow a small natural rock marker, while others prohibit markers. Many larger cemeteries have incorporated military, fraternal, and potter's field sections rather than them being stand-alone cemeteries.

Necropolis: The literal translation is city of the dead. A necropolis is large elaborate cemetery of an ancient city. I would be remiss if I did not include necropolis in this list. I include Anubis as part of my company logo, because he is the guardian of the necropolis.