



Mont Alto Memories

The Newsletter of the
Mont Alto Historical Society



Spring 2016

P.O. Box 615, Mont Alto, PA 17237

From the President's Pen

As Mont Alto poet J.T. Simmers wrote in his 1932 poem "Signs", Oh what joy they are bringing, Ere the signs of spring.

The Society has sprung into action with many planned activities. The March meeting brought Waynesboro author, Ruth Gembe with a very interesting program on *A Visit to Roadside*. Our exhibit case will once again be visited with a new family of frogs. On April 16 the Society will participate in the Franklin County *Spring into History Tour* with an exhibit on the Cumberland Valley Railroad. Our annual Ham Sandwich Sale is scheduled for Wednesday April 27. We hope to join with the *Friends of the Mont Alto Park* for a summer picnic at the park.

The support we receive from our members and friends is so important. Please encourage others to join.

Carolyn Poffenberger

Meet Your Officers & Board Members

The following are your Society officers for 2016:

President: Carolyn Poffenberger

Vice President: Beverly Spicer

Treasurer: Barbara Geer

Secretary: Berry Kline

In addition to the above officers, the following are members of the Board of Directors for 2016:

Tally Stymiest Barbara Rotz Frank Kocek

2016 Meeting Schedule

The Society meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Mont Alto Borough Hall on the center square. Some meetings will include a guest speaker on matters of historical interest to the area. When we don't have a guest speaker, the meeting begins with a business session, followed by an open session for sharing of historical artifacts and stories. Current members receive meeting reminder post cards in the mail. Meetings are also announced in the local newspapers and on the electronic bulletin board outside the Borough Hall.

SOCIETY DISPLAY CASE

When you're in "downtown" Mont Alto, stop in the Borough Hall and view the Society's display case to the right of the entrance door. As noted elsewhere, by the time this issue of the Newsletter is released, the display will feature a portion of the frog collection belonging to a local resident. The display will change several times during the year.

CURRENT SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to announce that twenty members have either renewed their membership or newly joined for the year 2016.

THE MONT ALTO CITIZENS BAND

Members of the cornet band held their largest festival on July 26, 1902. They sold ice cream, cake, etc. to raise money to buy their uniforms.

The Mont Alto Citizens Band played under the leadership of Prof. C.C. Funk. The band played at Kauffman's Grove, South Mountain and Cold Springs.

On May 23, 1904, Crawford A. Heefner took over leadership of the band.

On July 8, 1904, the band marched to Knepper's Station in their new uniforms to render some choice music.

On July 29, 1904, they applied for a charter through attorney Charles W. High. The incorporators were George Moser, G.E. Kennedy, Samuel Horn, Charles Heefner, Robert Small, Samuel Haddle and Crawford Heefner.

On September 15, 1905, the band voted a donation of \$35 for a memorial window in the new E.U.B. Church. Each year the band gave the church \$12.35 for the Bible Class.

The band charged 10 cents for admission to its concerts! On August 3, 1906, the band held a series of festivals and made \$59.34.

Compiled by Barbara Rotz; information obtained from the Preserving Our Heritage Archives & Museum, South Mountain, PA

SOCIETY GIFTS

These items make great gifts for current, past, or future Mont Alto residents!

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|--|---|
| MAHS T-Shirt: \$5 | MAHS Golf Shirt: \$10 (two left) |
| Wooden Keepsake, Mont Alto State Park Pavilion: \$5 | Wooden Keepsake, Otterbein U.M. Church: \$10 |
| Red ware Pottery Plate: \$15 | Mira Lloyd Dock (1853-1945) Book: \$3 |
| MAHS Christmas Ornaments, (2009, 2010, & 2012): \$5 | MAHS Calendars (2008, 2011, 2013 & 2015): \$2 |
| Mont Alto Sampler Book, written by Becky Dietrich: \$5 | 1883 Mont Alto Park Posters: \$0.50 |
| Society Photo Christmas Cards: 10 for \$10 | |

RECIPES REMEMBERED CRUMB PIE

By Laura Brosius

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| ½ cup butter | ½ cup lard |
| 2 cups sugar | 3 ½ cups flour |
| 4 eggs | 2 cups sweet milk |
| 4 teaspoons baking powder | |
| 1 scant tablespoon nutmeg | |
| 1 large tablespoon each of cinnamon and cloves | |

Rub the flour, sugar, baking powder, butter, lard and spices together. After it is crumbled, save out a cupful to sprinkle on top. Mix eggs and milk. Bake as a cake or in a pie crust at 400 degrees. Sprinkle crumbs on top. If the batter is too stiff the cake will be dry.

THE CUMBERLAND VALLEY RAILROAD

The Cumberland Valley lies in south central Pennsylvania and stretches from the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg to the Potomac River in Williamsport, MD.

Transportation was always an important issue in the valley. First, there were turnpikes; next, canals were all the rage. The first division of the B&O Railroad opened in June 1830. In December of that year a railroad engine was operating in South Carolina.

These events influenced some progressive men in the Cumberland Valley to approach the State legislature on the matter of building a railroad. They were to build a rail line from the Susquehanna to Carlisle. They estimated the cost to be \$120,000.

On April 2, 1831 the Assembly passed the act to incorporate the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company. They issued 4000 shares of stock at \$50 per share. The engineer hired for building the railroad was William Milnor Roberts. His report put the cost for everything including shops and stations at \$642,000. He projected the number of passengers at 100 per day and freight at 35,000 tons yearly. He summarized his figures on existing businesses in Franklin and Cumberland Counties as follows: 152 gristmills, 80 distilleries, 9 iron furnaces, 14 forges, 1 rolling mill, 3 paper mills, 12 oil mills, 25 clover mills, 35 cotton and woolen mills and 250 retail merchants.

On August 12, 1831 the first section of the CVRR was completed from Carlisle to the Susquehanna. By November 16, 1837 the line was completed to Chambersburg. Many festivities with large banquets and excursions celebrated the opening in each town. The bridge across the Susquehanna was opened on January 16, 1839.

The early engines were named the Cumberland Valley, Carlisle and the Nicholas Biddle. An early sleeping car was named Chambersburg.

UPCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS

- Saturday, April 16, 2016; Franklin County "Spring into History Tour", 10AM to 4PM. The Society will participate in this event with an open house and exhibit on the Cumberland Valley Railroad at the Borough Hall.
- Wednesday, April 27, 2016; Society ham sandwich sale
- In the planning stage; joint picnic with the Friends of Mont Alto Park.
- Under consideration: Tenth anniversary celebration of the founding of the Mont Alto Historical Society.
- Society holiday banquet; Thurs., Dec. 1, 2016
- Society holiday chapel service; Sat., Dec. 3, 2016

THE CVRR *(continued)*

In 1851 the engines, Pioneer and Jenny Lind, were to be delivered but they were involved in an accident during delivery. Both engines were repaired.

Following the Civil War, under the command of Col. George Wiestling, the Mont Alto Iron Company modernized and increased production. They needed a rail connection and in May, 1864, the Scotland & Mont Alto Railroad Company was formed. Col. Wiestling managed both the railroad and the iron company.

The Mont Alto Railroad was completed in November 1871. The line hauled iron ore from the Mont Alto Iron Co. Excursions to the new Mont Alto Park were added in 1875. The engine Jenny Lind made runs to the park. The CVRR financed the 6.2-mile extension to Waynesboro. The extension was completed in 1879.

When the Mont Alto Railroad failed to make their interest payment, the CVRR acquired the Mont Alto Railroad stock and gained control. In 1897 the Mont Alto Railroad ceased operating its own rail line and the CVRR took over.

Submitted by Carolyn Poffenberger, Source: *Valley Spirit Newspaper, History of the Cumberland Valley Railroad by Westhaeffer.*

A MONT ALTO PIONEER

NICHOLAS BITTINGER was born June 11, 1725 in Ottweiler, Alsace Germany/France. He immigrated on August 30, 1737 to York County, Pennsylvania. He came as a child with his parents aboard the ship, Samuel, arriving in Philadelphia.

Nicholas was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Conewago, now Hanover, PA, (Adams County). When the church had no pastor, he was licensed by the synod to read sermons from the pulpit and conduct other religious services.

Nicholas married Maria Rainboldt when he was 22 years of age on June 14, 1747. Research from the *History of York County* shows they had nine children; two sons and seven daughters. He served on the Committee of Safety in 1774, commanded a company, and was taken prisoner at Ft. Washington. Nicholas Bittinger appears in the U.S. Census of 1790.

Nicholas built a gristmill at Arendtsville. He also owned 1,000 acres in Washington and Guilford Townships in Franklin County adjoining the land of Daniel and Samuel Hughes. The land of the current Mont Alto Cemetery was once owned by Nicholas Bittinger's estate. Nicholas died on May 2, 1804 at 78 years of age. He is buried at St. John's Lutheran cemetery in Abbottstown, PA. He died without a will and there were lengthy court proceedings to settle the estate.

Nicholas' grandson, Nicholas Bittinger Lane, was born in Funkstown, now Mont Alto, in 1892. He was the son of Samuel and Anna Barbara Bittinger Lane. Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnson, who presided over the White House during the term of her uncle, James Buchanan, as President, belonged to the same family.

Nicholas B. Lane learned the art of surveying, but in 1818 began the study of medicine with Dr. S.D. Culbertson in Chambersburg. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania before he was twenty-one years of age. Dr. Lane also acquired skill as a dentist and for thirty years practiced medicine in Chambersburg. His office was next door west of the present Shook Home for the Aged. His wife was Eliza Hetich from the prominent Chambersburg family. They had eleven children. Dr. N.B. Lane died in 1853, the year of the cholera epidemic in Chambersburg. Two sons, Samuel G. Lane and William C. Lane, also became physicians.

Article written by Carolyn Poffenberger with information obtained from the following sources: *History of York County and Adams County; 1790 York County Census; Cumberland County Historical Society Cases of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania; Medical Men of Franklin County.*

IN MEMORIUM

The Society wishes to honor those Mont Alto Residents who have gone before us. We offer our condolences to the families of Russell Bender, Tony Rock, Joseph Benchoff, Donald Yost, Hilda Bakner, and W. Carl Shetler.