Johan Georg Bergstresser—a boy of fourteen, was the first Bergstresser immigrant to arrive in America in 1731. He traveled across the Atlantic Ocean with no other family members on board. He pretended to be sixteen, as noted by captain John Stedman in the ship manifest. At the time Bergstresser emigrated from the Palatinate, many other young men did the same as new requirements for military service became very strict. The German Bergstressers made their home in the area of Malchen in the Palatinate. Documents recorded the origin of the ‘Bergstresser’ name around 1400 A.D. The family acquired the name ‘Bergstresser’ (Berg ‘mountain’ + Strasse ‘road’) because they lived along a Roman-built road near the city of Darmstadt—the road still in use today. The Castle Frankenstein is located in this area and owes its fame to the rumor it was the inspiration for Mary Shelley’s well-known book, Frankenstein.

When he arrived in Philadelphia, Johan George disembarked from the ship ‘Pennsylvania Merchant’ and was required to sign the Oaths of Fidelity and Abjuration. This was compulsory for all non-British immigrants to disavow any ties to other monarchs and embrace the British ruler; and to renounce any previous connection to the Pope. After paying a registration fee, Johan George was free to go live his life as a colonist.

Johan George could read and write German—perhaps because he came from a family whose occupations required those skills. His father was the local forester and his grandfather was a judge and mayor of Malchen. The family tree was sprinkled with teachers, gunsmiths and shopkeepers. However, Johan George’s plan was to become a successful farmer in America. The next documentation of Johan was in 1736, when he married Veronica Bauser at the Tohichon Reformed Church in Bedminster Township, Bucks County. In 1738, he purchased a 100-acre plot in Rockhill Township, Bucks County.
A Message from our President

On behalf of the Lower Saucon Township Historical Society’s Board of Directors, I’m pleased to extend an invitation to all our members and supporters to join us for a presentation and celebration showcasing the successful repointing of the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse. Meet historic preservationist and principal of Preservation Works Ltd., Rob Wozniak, who will give a presentation on historic preservation and short tour and demonstration on the repointing of the schoolhouse.

Our repointing celebration will be on June 13, 2018 from 7-9 pm at the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse. Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to Cyan at 610) 625-8771 or lshistorical@yahoo.com by June 1, 2018. Hope to see you there!

— Sandra B. Yerger
Journey
Continued from page 1

County. Two years later in 1740, Johan became a naturalized citizen and was later appointed Constable of Rockhill Twp.

Before he died in 1771, Johan had accumulated almost 500 acres that encompassed several farms. Today the old Bergstresser homestead is located near the intersection of Three Mile Run Road and Butler Lane in Rockhill Twp.

When Veronica passed away in 1765, she was survived by Johan George and six adult children. Their fifth child, John M. Bergstresser born in 1747, lived in Tinicum Township. Upon Johan George’s death, his properties were divided among his children.

- John M. Bergstresser
  Married to Anna Eva Ruth in 1812, John M. sold his inherited land to his brothers— in 1775, he bought a large tract of land in Tinicum. John served in the Continental Army through much of the Revolutionary War. He could read and write German and English and wrote with a strong clear script. Even as he served for the patriots cause, John was required to take the Oath of Allegiance in 1777, renouncing the authority of King George III. John took up the occupation of joiner (carpenter). He supported the Tinicum Evangelical Lutheran Church by donating land and supplying a fence. John and Anna were the parents of seven children—their son, John Jacob eventually settled in Lower Saucon Township.

- John Jacob Bergstresser
  In 1800, John Jacob married Susana Frey in Tinicum; within the year, they moved to Lower Saucon Twp. The John Jacob Bergstresser farm was next to his brother Phillip, and located in the Kunsman Corner area. John Jacob and Susana had ten children in 18 years. One of their children, Joseph, was a teacher and tax collector. At that time, Joseph documented the schools in the township in a hand-written journal, now in the archives of L.S.T.H.S.

- Samuel Auchmuty Bergstresser
  Born in 1803, the fourth child of John Jacob and Susana, Samuel cultivated a sixty-one acre farm near Redington and later became a weaver. Their homestead was located near Benjamin Franklin Shimer’s farm. A teacher in the township, Shimer raised funds and organized the building of Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse. Samuel A. Bergstresser married Elizabeth Transeau and had four children. Born in 1838, their third child, Abraham Transeau was a farmer in the Leithsville area. He married Susanna Lambert Unangst and were the parents of ten children. The 1900 census listed their son, Alfred Linus Bergstresser, 22, a laborer on the Zoller Farm next to the Bergstresser homestead.

- Alfred Linus Bergstresser
  Alfred Linus married Daisy Salinda Bauder in 1903 and had three children. In 1906, Alfred purchased Jacob C. Wasser’s carpentry shop in Wassergass (Ironville) and converted the shop to a general store, which presently stands at 3640 Lower Saucon Road. Alfred was a director of the Saucon Valley Trust Co., and also served as treasurer and trustee of the Trinity Evangelical Church. Alfred operated a produce stand at the Municipal Market in South Bethlehem. In 1903, Alfred was one of the founders of the Koch’s Iron mine and served as postmaster in Wassergass. His son, John A. Bergstresser began working at the general store in the 1920s. John’s son, William Bergstresser joined the business in the 1970s.
Preserving ‘The President’ Pump Engine House Site

Today, few people know that in 1872, one of the world’s largest stationary engines was in operation just south of Bethlehem, Pa. at the zinc mines in the village of Friedensville in Saucon Valley. Mining was hampered by high volumes of ground water that infiltrated into the mines. The solution was to provide a pump that could extract ground water while zinc ore was mined. Today, remnants of the massive stone structure that once housed the Cornish engine stands adjacent to a quarry filled with aquamarine-colored water. This bucolic setting has the potential to become an attractive park, complete with historical and archeological significance. Located in Upper Saucon Township between Old Bethlehem Pike and Center Valley Parkway on posted private property owned by Lehigh University, the engine house remnants stand on the gated site closed to the public.

Mark Connar, a local resident whose background is in business and historical research, studied the history of the pump and is currently working with the township and the property owner to consider future uses of the property for potential development of an historical park built around the site of the Ueberroth zinc mine pit and the engine house. Mark contacted various individuals and organizations to garner a broader coalition for interest in making this preservation project a reality. For this reason, Mark made a presentation to the LSHS on Jan. 10, 2018 at the Lower Saucon Township Hall.

In regard to preservation of the engine house, Mark said, “I have been passing by the engine house since I was a young boy. I thought it looked like a castle from the Classic Illustrated comic books I loved to read. Stories like, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court were a particular favorite. Much to my surprise, my research into the engine house in Upper Saucon Township led directly back to Cornwall, England, the legendary home of King Arthur! An even greater surprise was the architectural uniqueness of this structure and the extent that the pumping engine was a milestone in the history, both in mining and mechanical engineering.”

“The President’ Pump in Friedensville was dedicated in the name of the sitting U.S. president and Civil War Hero, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. The pump was capable of pulling up to 17,000 gallons of water per minute from a depth of 300 feet. The massive 3,000-horsepower engine had a single steam cylinder with an inside diameter of 110 inches—so large, that before its inauguration, the company held a banquet inside of it. Steam used to drive the engine came from sixteen boilers that consumed 28 tons of coal per day, all hand stoked. The engine and boilers made of steel, wrought and cast iron, together weighed over 1,000 tons.

People from all over the world came to see the pump engine. Its performance was reported from The New York Times to The South Australian Advertiser, newspapers that described the engine as an engineering marvel. Although ‘The President’ was built in world-class foundries in Philadelphia, and was designed and operated by Cornish-born engineers and technicians, whose experience in deep-rock mining technology was recognized as the best in the world at the time. In terms of advances in steam technology, ‘The President’ was the largest walking-beam pumping engine ever used in a mining application, and the largest single-cylinder stationary steam engine in the Western Hemisphere—arguably the largest in the world—when the factors of physical size, power and volume of water removal considered on the whole. Cornishman John West, designer of ‘The President,’ went on to design and oversee the installation of pumps in the Western US gold and silver mines, where these Cornish-style pumps were essential to deep-rock mining.

‘The President’ Pump had two phases of operation, continuously from 1872 until 1876, when the mines shut down due to the cost of water removal compared to competitive sources. ‘The President’ resumed operations from the 1880s until the early 1890s, when zinc ore was mined for European governments who prized the mineral’s superior properties for the production of brass (an alloy of...


copper and zinc) used for gun cartridges. The pump was so powerful that when in operation, nearby springs and wells ran dry for miles around, which forced farmers to dig deeper wells as the water table dropped. In local newsprint, ‘The President’ was often referred to as a “monster machine.” The zinc mines were finally shut down in 1893, though zinc mining resumed again in the 1950s, when New Jersey Zinc opened a new mine near the old one in Upper Saucon Township.

In 1900, ‘The President’s’ engine was removed and sold for scrap—and the stone engine house was dynamited so that small stones could be and hauled away. Crowds came out and watched as the sixteen boilers were hauled away for other uses. One boiler that survived was installed as a water tank in a former furniture factory in Allentown.

Since the stone engine house was too massive to demolish, the stone walls and foundation still exist today. In reality, the pump engine was an integral part of the engine house, designed to support it rather than simply provide protection from the weather. Today, similar pump engine houses in Cornwall form key monuments of a UNESCO World Heritage landscape. They are to Cornwall what windmills are to Holland. The engine house in Friedensville is the only surviving example of a Cornish-style “house-built” pumping engine building in the U.S., and one of only a few examples elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere that still exist.

Overall, the engine house structure measures 40 feet high; one wall is nine feet thick and supported the two sets of 36-foot long walking beams that transmitted power from the engine to the pump shafts. The floor plan is dominated by a central masonry platform upon which the 200-ton engine was anchored, with large pits on either side for the two flywheels that were 30 feet in diameter, each weighing 92 tons. The installation was so massive, that it sits on bedrock 114 feet below ground level. The interior platform, which supported the engine’s cylinder, extends 32 feet below the floor level rock face.

“We are fortunate that both Lehigh University and Upper Saucon Township are interested in preserving their historic patrimony, but this structure was abandoned over 120 years ago, and despite its sturdy construction, it shows significant wear and tear. Urgent steps to arrest the decay and preserve the remains are necessary for this monument to be enjoyed by subsequent generations,” said Mark Connar.

Lehigh University recently submitted a grant to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) that requests funding to conduct a structural analysis, including 3-D scanning of the engine house remains. The grant request also includes a cultural resource and property survey assessment to support a subsequent discussion in regard to a potential heritage park. In addition to the grant request, a Lehigh University course is currently underway as part of the University’s award-winning Technological Entrepreneurship Capstone program. In this course, a cross-discipline team of students currently evaluate heritage park concepts and works on virtual reality reconstruction of ‘The President’ pumping engine. As these programs and plans move forward, Mark Connar will keep us informed on the latest developments.

—Karen M. Samuels
An Update from the Archive Room

Our archivist, Bob Sterling has a new project in the works: he has prepared a binder to contain the ongoing history of the Lutz-Franklin schoolhouse project. He purchased archival sleeves for photos, copies of reports on progress from meeting minutes, financial information, fund raising efforts and members’ reminiscences of events to restore the schoolhouse. We have already lost several members who where involved in the initial effort to save the Lutz-Franklin and to resurrect the Township Historical Society. We are looking for photos of the art auction and the trip to Harrisburg for the Historic Site designation. Any and all contributions from our members would be most appreciated. Bob also would welcome anyone who would like to help work on this project. If interested, please stop by during office hours on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or call or email the office.

Looking back in 2005, Peggy Fluck and her brother George Ringhoffer supervise the restoration of the front porch of the Lutz Franklin Schoolhouse.

LSTHS 2018 Memberships

Members of the LSTHS and our local community should take pride in what we have accomplished as we grow in recognition and reputation for both the restoration of the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse and educational programs.

Spring Membership Renewals

Susan Kirk, Meryle Person, Francine and Ilhan Citak, Janet and Albert Hoffert, Carl and Greta Sutton, Charles and Rita Baolet, Curtis and Andrea Cooke, Sterling and Sandra Bartolet, Patricia and Richard Roberts, Douglas Hein, Jerry Holm, Joseph Sofka, Elizabeth Zellner, Charles and Marie Luther, Ron Hineline, Laura Ray.

New Membership—

Christina and Mark Connar.

Support the Society and become a member.

Make checks payable to “L.S.T.H.S.” Return this form with your payment to:
Lower Saucon Township Historical Society
P.O. Box 176 Hellertown, PA 18055

Please print your name as it should appear on your membership card -

Circle: Mr. & Mrs. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Dr.

Name: __________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________

City: ___________________ State: _____ Zip: ______

Phone: __________________ Email: ________________

Check Membership Level:

____ Individual $15  ____ Family $25  ____ Junior (student) $5
____ Lifetime $250  ____ Corporate $350  ____ Other donation

Please indicate if you’d be interested in helping us in any of the following areas:

____ Artifacts  ____ Special Events____
____ Schoolhouse Docent  ____ Baking ____
____ Membership  ____ Fundraising ____
____ Grant Writing  ____ Public Relations ____
____ Programs/Presentations  ____
____ Other, specify __________________
____ I attended a One-Room School

Meetings take place on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Seidersville Hall (next to the Lower Saucon Town Hall) on Old Philadelphia Pike, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Stop by and join us!

LSTHS is a 501(c)3 Non-profit Organization

Receive your newsletter wherever you are this season—just send us an e-mail at lshistorical@yahoo.com and we will send the newsletter to your e-mail address electronically!
Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse

Directions to the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse:

From I-78 Take exit 67 (Hellertown/Bethlehem), turn left on Rt. 412/ Main St. Go 1 block and turn left at traffic light onto Cherry Lane. Follow 4 blocks to end and turn left on Easton Road. Go 2.1 miles & turn left on Countryside Lane. Go 1.3 miles to the schoolhouse.

Calendar of Events ~ 2018

A friendly reminder —
Monthly meetings scheduled on the second Wednesday of the month begin at 7 p.m. in Seidersville Hall, 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike. Guests are always welcome and light refreshments are served.

Please note our new office hours in 2018: Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wed., June 13, 2018, 7 p.m.
Repainting Celebration - June 13, 2018 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse. Meet historic preservationist and principal of Preservation Works Ltd., Rob Wozniak, who will give a presentation on historic preservation, followed by a short tour and demonstration on the repainting of the schoolhouse. Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to Cyan at (610) 625-8771 or lshistorical@yahoo.com by June 1, 2018.

Repointing filled missing mortar on the exterior walls of the schoolhouse.