

CURATOR'S REPORT

THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY 14, 2026



THE FORMER HOME OF JOHN & ELOISE (GILL) LONG

**(BOTH FORMER BOARD MEMBERS OF THE BERLIN AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY)**

HOME CONSTRUCTED IN 1999

BERLIN

A SCENE SIMILAR TO YESTERYEAR WHEN MEN GATHERED AT THE COUNTRY STORE!

BY DAVID R. HAY

Old timers will remember hearing the older people share about gatherings at the small country store - gathered around the pot-bellied stoves - while sharing the news of the neighborhood or the community. That was a time period so different than the hectic pace that most of us experience in 2026. As the clock ticks away, most of us have the habit of watching the clock so we can rush into other activities awaiting us.

On the morning of June 10, 2026 during volunteer hours four of us retired menfolk sat around in the office of the Berlin Area Historical Society and reminisced - quite similar to what men usually did around the potbellied stove in the neighborhood stores of yesteryear. It's always a delight when Fred Bittner, 90 years young, joins in visiting. Also there were Larry R. Pritts, 85, Gary Estnick, 79, and myself, 78. When we were not busy greeting visitors, we had time to rehash some memories from decades ago.

Fred remembered youthful times when his family bought cream from the dairy farm of Helen Wallace and visiting the neighborhood farm - "Mountain Brook Farm:" of Karl and Laura Broeseker. He recalled the butter his family purchased that Laura made and sold to customers. I remembered going to the same Broeseker farm home with my dad to buy some home-churned butter. While dad visited inside the home, my siblings and I played on the lawn. During WW! when ration stamps were necessary to buy butter, Fred's parents, Francis and Elizabeth Bittner had two milk cows and churned their own butter.

Larry Pritts and Fred discussed trapping wildlife and selling the hides. For a while they sold hides to Dale McKinley on Main Street after he purchased the former Crawford's store. Once Fred's teacher told him that the next time he came to school smelling like a skunk after trapping that critter, she would send him home. Gary Estnick and Fred recalled Dillon's Garage along the Mason Dixon Highway, south of Meyersdale. Gary remembered a Christmas tree that he purchased there during his early years of marriage. It was so tall that the Estnick family had to cut a foot off of it before they could stand it up in their home.

We reminisced about Dale Walker's Roadside Park between Fred's former home along the Salvo Road and Dale's service station and store along the Cumberland Highway. Fred recalled his son, Doug's childhood years when Doug worked for a quarter a day for neighbor Helen Wallace. Helen was the first female one of us guys remembered driving a truck. Helen also drove tractor and was busy in the fields with planting and harvesting crops. Helen was a foster daughter of Bill and Ada Hay and eventually inherited their farm along Sawmill Road. Helen married Grover Wallace, who operated his sawmill on that farm.

Fred and Larry both recalled going to the movie shows at the Blue Ridge Theater. Fred received an allowance of ten cents a week. The Saturday movie - sometimes a double feature - cost 11 cents. Fred would go to his mother, who visited relatives in Berlin, asking for a penny to have enough coins to attend the movie. Later Fred's father raised his allowance to 25 cents a week at which time Fred had enough money for the movie and some candy. Larry, who attended school in Shanksville, recalled going to the Blue Ridge Theater in Berlin. He named several Berlin girls that threw popcorn at him while he was sitting ahead of them in the theater.

An abundance of other subjects were discussed with each of us joining in the conversations. More than an hour slipped away. The only thing bringing closure to our discussions was hearing the historic Heffley clock striking the 12 noon hour - the closing time for the historical society.



A NEW DISPLAY AT THE LICHVAR SPORTS SECTION. JUNE 8, 2026

**TWO
NEW
DISPLAY
CASES
FOR THE
LICHVAR
SPORTS
SECTION!**





LARRY PRITTS DISPLAYS A THERMOMETER FROM THE LATE MILTON LOWRY OF THE SHANKSVILLE AREA. THE THERMOMETER IS FROM THE JOHN AND ELOISE LONG COLLECTION.

MILTON HARRISON LOWRY

THE NAME OF MILTON LOWRY (1906 - 1990) IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE PLUMBINGS AND HEATING PROFESSION AS WELL AS WITH ELECTRIC WIRING. HE LIVED IN THE SHANKSVILLE AREA WITH HIS LONG-TIME WIFE, THE FORMER MARIE AUGUSTA (BARKMAN) LOWRY. MANY REMEMBER THE SERVICES HE PROVIDED FOR THEIR HOMES.

WAYNE C. LOWRY

MILTON'S SON, WAYNE C. LOWRY (1936-2020) WAS EMPLOYED BY COLUMBIA GAS OF PA IN MANY ROLES. HE RETIRED IN 1990 AFTER 29 YEARS OF SERVTO DEVOTE HIS TIME TO THE PLUMBING AND HEATING BUSINESS. HIS WIFE, THE FORMER AUDREY McCLAREN, WAS HIS CEO.



LARRY PRITTS DISPLAYS THE BUCKY WISER CALENDAR AND A CARPENTER'S APRON FROM FORNWALD BROTHERS BERLIN PLANING MILL. THE FORNWALD BROTHERS WERE EARLY BERLIN CONTRACTORS AND BUILDERS.

ITEMS FROM THE JOHN AND ELOISE LONG HOME

Leanne Calvert, Gary Estnick, and David Hay were in for a delightful - but yet sad - experience when we met in the basement of the Long home with Eloise and her son, David in early May, 2026. While it was sad to see the collections of John and Eloise be removed from their basement, it was a fantastic time for the Berlin Area Historical Society to become recipients of numerous, one-of-a-kind advertising items and selected items from their Coca Cola collection. Larry Pritts was willing to hold the Bucky Wiser calendar while sharing memories of having patronizing that business. The current generations don't remember the Fornwald Brothers Planning Mill and being Berlin contractors.

RALPH LEE LEISTER

100 YEARS OF AGE



Ralph Lee Leister, a long-time resident along Brush Creek in Northampton Township celebrated his 100th birthday on June 18, 2026 at Rest Assured Nursing Center. Ralph was born on June 18, 1926 one of the 14 children born to the late James Alfred and Edna Naomi (Emerick) Leister.

He was married for 64 years to the late Edna Mae Boyer, who passed away on February 26, 2017. The life of the retired B&O Railroader will be featured in an upcoming edition of The Memos publication of the Berlin Area Historical Society.

IN MEMORY OF DAVID MICHAEL BRINHAM

1939 - 2026



David M. Brinham was a retired teacher at Shanksville Stonycreek High School where he taught Social Studies. A resident of Johnstown, Mr. Brinham died peacefully at home on June 16, 2026 at the age of 86 years. The picture with this story was taken from the 1966 Chicahonian yearbook when he was in his early career as a teacher in Shanksville. Dave was born on September 15, 1939 in Somerset, where he was raised. He is survived by his wife, Connie j. (Kaufman) Brinham.

He graduated from Somerset High School in 1957. He received his bachelor's degree from Westchester College in 1961 and then his master's degree from The University of Pittsburgh. After serving two years in the U.S. Army, he began his teaching career at Shanksville Stonycreek High School. David loved playing golf at Somerset Country Club and Legends Golf & Country Club in Ft. Myers.

Mr. Brinham was laid to rest in Grandview Cemetery in Johnstown.

MARIAN ELIZABETH (SMITH) DYER

100 YEARS OLD ON JULY 7, 2026

By David R. Hay

Marian Elizabeth (Smith) Dyer captivated her audience on June 19, 2026 at a special “I Love America” program held by the Wills Grangers. Also included in the program was a Boy Scout’s flag ceremony; speakers William Lehman and Stewart Saylor talking about the Great Glades Chapter of the SAR and the American Revolution; plus an introduction to the Berlin Fife and Drum Corps by Bruce “Chip” Landis and a musical presentation given by him and three of his grandsons. The Berlin Fife and Drum Corps has about 60 different numbers they provide for special celebrations and parades.

Another special highlight honored a beloved Brothersvalley Township resident, Marian Dyer for devoting 50 years of her lifetime to the nursing profession and the presentation of a patriotic cake and citation recognizing her 50 years spent in the nursing profession. A patriotic red, white and blue crocheted afghan was also a gift to honor the keen-minded lady on her up-coming centennial birthday. What kept the audience spellbound were the interesting stories of her lifetime, her nursing career, and her many interests that have kept her in touch with both the past and the present times.

Marian grew up in Berlin and after graduation in 1944, at the age of 18 from the Berlin Brothersvalley High School as class valedictorian, she departed Berlin for nurses’ training at Allegheny Hospital in Cumberland. That training, as part of the Cadet Nurse Corps, prepared her for her nurse’s career that spanned 50 years. Marian and her brothers - Robert, Harry, and Don A. - were the children of the late John Irvin “Ram” and Alverda Carrie (Schrock) Miller. Their father was a stone



mason and an Army veteran of WWI, having served in Germany.

The long-time nurse displayed one of her white nursing uniforms while sharing stories pertaining to her nursing career. She served as a nurse in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania and with her marriage to the late Joseph Victor Dyer (1914-1995) lived life to the fullest. Joe, her husband of 47 years, was a native of West Virginia. Her adventurous husband Joe was a 50-year member of the Ironworkers Union having retired in 1978. In 1970, while the couple lived and worked in Wilmington, Delaware, they purchased their 90-acre farm along Shaffer Run below Glen Savage in Allegheny Township. The couple enjoyed vacations and retirement years at that farm in the mountain. Both were members of the Mt. Olive Lutheran Church.

Marian loved living and spending time at their farm. She found great enjoyment in gardening, watching and feeding the birds and being in touch with the quietness of nature. She enjoyed feeding the hummingbirds, having bluebird houses scattered around the lawn and barn yard, fishing along Shaffer Run, and raising asparagus and other garden produce. In more recent years as a widow, Marian sold the farm and re-located to a home she purchased at the edge of Berlin. At her Brotherton Road residence, Marian continues to enjoy life while having caregiver's assistance while her arthritis attempts to slow her down. Although a bit hard-of-hearing, Marian has oodles of stories to entertain persons who take time to listen and to appreciate the life of a

knowledgeable lady who grew up toward the end of the depression years.



At 86 years of age, Marian Dyer was pictured on May 25, 2023 filling her hummingbird feeders and pulling her asparagus because of the threat of a frost to her peaceful valley.

Down the road from Marian's former 90-acre farm is an area where cabins are located - an area where older natives referred to as "Bean Town" along Shaffer Run.

DONATIONS



Harvey Berkey's granddaughter donated older pictures of the Glade U.C.C. consistory and another picture of the older members of that congregation. The new signs with pictures of BAHS's buildings were put on display around the town clock on Berlin's lower diamond. Bob Ansell, Larry Pritts, Gary Estnick and Leann Calvert moved two display cases from storage in the barn to our back display room where they are a nice addition to the John and Lucille Lichvar Sports area. LuAnn Walker donated photos. Mark Yoder donated pictures and information on the Gindlesperger Cemetery in Stonycreek Township. Karen Glessner donated a John Fletcher chair, First Society of Farm Women's items, school papers of Clara Braeseker (Hay) and miscellaneous items.

The barn crew has re-arranged items in the barn in the process of making items more accessible for tours. Excess and broken items were sold during an on-line auction conducted by Adam Fitzgerald. Additional items have been donated by Christina (Glessner) Hemminger from the estate of her parents, Bill and Shirley Glessner. Items include: "My Best Cartoons of 1949" (reprinted from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette); Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories (4 different series); The Story of the Panama Canal; children's stories; pencil stencils; and a 1995 Berlin Choir Christmas Canada on VCR. Calvin and Barbara Pyle placed on loan a braided rug for the Humble House. Delores (Hauger) Brendle donated the Robert Hauger war ration book. Leanna Coughenour and Larry Pritts donated recent patriotic programs while Betty Chaney donated Somerset Magazines.

Lorie (Maust) Shaw donated Heffley Hardware sales slips, a 2003 Berlin calendar, a Glottfelty's Hardware light, a Ken Lafferty thermometers, and advertising yard sticks for Highland Mutual Insurance; Keidel's Hardware, Glottfelty's Hardware, and Main Street Hardware at 535 Main Street, Berlin. Lois (Scheffel) Pletcher donated a copy of Pennyroyal, which is Catherine J. Miller's book of poems and songs. Susan (Cowan) Johnston's donated items from Glencoe will be featured in the August Curator's report. Thank you to our volunteers for your services. David R. Hay, Curator



**THE ORIGINAL SITE BEFORE THE BUILDING
WAS MOVED TO UNITY UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST (GLADES CHURCH)**



**CURRENT SITE - OWNED AND MAINTAINED
BY THE BERLIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

**THEN AND NOW
GLADE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL**