



HISTORIA

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 2006

Enjoy a talk on Pennsylvania German Fraktur at our March meeting



Bucks County is rich in Pennsylvania German heritage, and according to Quakertown resident Ronald Trauger, it's also rich in an art form that has become big in the antique circuit, German Fraktur. "Bucks County is a hot bed for them," Trauger said. "People don't realize what they have." Trauger, who is a collector of the early Pennsylvania German drawings, will discuss what they are, their importance and the history at our March historical society meeting.

The primarily religious documents, which are made up of calligraphy type writing in German with colorfully drawn pictures, were used originally as documentation, like birth certificates. Trauger's presentation will consist primarily of a slide show and speech. He is also inviting anyone who believes they have a piece of German Fraktur to bring it along for appraisal or translation. When he began collecting the drawings 25 to 30 years ago, Trauger said there wasn't much of a market. "I did it out of pride for my ancestors," he said. Now the art form, which ranges in size, has gained steam in the antique market averaging \$3,000 to \$5,000 a piece and as much as \$300,000. "When I started doing presentations, little did I know how much they would catch on and how valuable they'd be," Trauger said. "They're a very hot thing in the antique circuit."

Pieces dated between 1770 and 1830 are the most valuable. "My passion really is to just see these and document them," Trauger said. A collector, with approximately 600 pieces himself, Trauger also deals with clients throughout the United States and has given talks across the East Coast. In addition to the hundreds of German Fraktur drawings in his collection, Trauger also has thousands of photographs of people with their own pieces.

The art form originally came over to America from Europe with early German settlers, Trauger said. The early pieces, which usually include a date, are hand drawn on paper with German script and brightly colored pictures of birds, people and animals, in reds, yellows and greens. While some of the pieces are documentation of significant events, German Fraktur was also used for house blessings and can be found in the front of religious books. When the settlers first came over many, could not read or write, so they turned to Fraktur artists to draw up the documents. "Parents kept them as a source of pride or record," Trauger said, adding that at the time there was no form of public documentation.

Plan to attend this interesting talk on Fraktur at our next historical society meeting, Wednesday, March 22 at 7:30 PM. We will be meeting St. John's Methodist Church on Almshouse road across from Solly's farm stand. All are welcome.

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

It's March and to me that always conjures up the arrival of spring – Daffodils and Tulips and the trees budding. Some of my daughters and I will be making the yearly trek to the flower show. It's one of the local events that make me glad to live in Bucks County.

I hope you all enjoy our featured speaker this month. I read about him in a newspaper article and thought you would enjoy the Fraktur art form that goes back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Fraktur is art and calligraphy and was prominent in Pennsylvania German culture.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our temporary meeting place this month, St John's Methodist Church on Almshouse Road across from Solly's. We are hoping our May meeting will be back at the library.

Happy Spring, With affection,

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!

**PLEASE FILL OUT AND SEND IN THE
MEMBERSHIP FORM ON THE LAST
PAGE OF THIS HISTORIA**

WEB PAGE UPDATE

The NTHS web page has been updated. We will be adding more content in the future including financial reports and minutes from our meetings. Check it out at:
www.northamptonshirehistoricalsociety.org

**Congratulations to the following NTHS
members that gave above and beyond their
normal membership dues in 2005.**

| | |
|---------------|--|
| NTHS Circle - | Doug Crompton |
| Sponsor - | Stanley and Dorothy Davis, Margaret and Lewis Hull |
| Sustaining - | Kathy and Larry Belikoff, Catherine Ciaverelli, Christine and Joseph Fluehr, Lois Leitenberger III, Virginia Smith, Childrens Cultural Center, Steven Rovner |

UPCOMING EVENTS

**NTHS General Meeting
Pennsylvania German Fraktur
Wednesday March 22 - 7:30 PM**
 St. Johns Methodist Church
 Richboro, PA

MERCER MUSEUM

Pine and Ashland Streets, Doylestown, PA (215) 345-0210 Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. Noon-5, Tues. until 9 Admission: \$6, \$5.50 seniors, \$2.50 Ages 6-17, Free to members and children under 6

"The Rescue of the Colors"
 Extended through August 31, 2006
 Museum Hours, Mercer Museum

"Dolls from the Attic"
 Extended through December 31, 2006
 Mercer Museum

Self-guided Tour: "Finding Franklin"
 Through December 31, 2006
 Mercer Museum

February 18 - May 14, 2006
 Ansel Adams - Celebration of Genius
 Michener Art Museum

March 20-25
 Museum Shop Sale - 10 AM - 4:30 PM
 Mercer Museum Lobby

33rd Annual Folk Fest
 May 13-14 - 10 AM - 5 PM
 Mercer Museum Grounds

Spring State Craft Festival
 Celebrate Crafts in the Park
 May 20 & 21, 2006
 Saturday: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday: 10 am - 5 pm Tyler State Park, Richboro, PA

June 3 - 12 Noon - rain date June 4
 House Tour - Tom Baust
 115 Middle Holland road

June 24
 Henry Mercer's 150th Birthday

An Interview with Norman Turner

By Betty Luff

Everyone in Richboro knew "Nat" Turner. What a guy! Since I am also a life-long resident, it was always a pleasure to shake his hand, talk about how Richboro has changed and the people we remember.



Norman's parents, Fred and Virginia (Knoel) Turner. Taken about the time of their marriage in 1911.

"Nat" was born Robert Norman Turner on May 25, 1913. His parents were Fred and Virginia (Knoel) Turner. One year later, his sister, Ruth, arrived. Both were born in the white house at 880 Bustleton Pike, Richboro, which is still occupied by his sister. The property is just south of the intersection of Bustleton and Second Street Pike where their father, a Wheel Wright, operated a blacksmith shop. I have always known the corner as the "Turner Body Works." Fred Turner was born in 1887 in a small stone house near the intersection of Neshaminy creek and Buck road. Virginia, born in 1885, came from Port Royal, Virginia. They were married in 1911 in Richboro. The blacksmith shop later became Turner Body Works where they made truck bodies. Norman recalled many experiences as a child at the shop. He was often enlisted to help his father in the shoeing of horses and one of his jobs of holding the horse's lip with a pair of pliers to keep him from bucking. Norm's son in law, Don Norin, recalls seeing the hearth at the shop as late as 1966 before it was dismantled and sold. He also took an interest in a double barrel shotgun, which dated back to 1860. It was still hanging in the shop. Norm later gave it to him. Nancy Turner relates a story that shows her grandfather's tenacity, "There was a big grinding wheel at the shop and one day he cut off the tip of his finger while using the wheel. He just dipped his finger in turpentine and continued working." Nancy also remembers a welder that worked at the shop, Tommy Nadeau, "He would bring one of those metal lunch boxes to work each day and he always had yummy desserts that he would share with us." Fred died in 1961 and Virginia in 1973. They both are buried in Newtown cemetery.

One of Norm's first jobs was at the Luff and Traub general store, which was across the street from the Spread Eagle Inn on the southeast corner of route 232 and 332. This was probably his first business experience. He enjoyed helping the customers and he was so short he had to stand on a crate to use the cash register.

Norm attended the old Richboro High School, which was built in 1913, the year Norman was born. He graduated in 1931, along with his sister, Ruth, and seven other students. He went on to graduate from Ursinus College in 1935 with a degree in business.

Norman married Hilda Smith in 1938. Hilda was born October 10, 1909 in Rushland. She graduated from Hatboro High School and went on to work at Roberts and Manders. She was an accomplished pianist and played for the Sunday School at Addisville Church. Norm and Hilda became the parents of three daughters, Elaine, Sandra, and Nancy. Elaine passed away in 1998 and Hilda in 2000. They had celebrated 62 years of marriage. Sandra and her husband Don live in Churchville and Nancy lives in Richboro. Norman is the grandfather of three and has four great grandchildren.

In 1942, I was employed by the Reading Company in Philadelphia but did not have a license or a car. At this time Norman was employed by Rohm & Haas and since he passed the Churchville station each morning, he would drop me off. In 1942 neither cars or garages needed to be locked in Richboro, so I would walk down to his garage and wait in his car each morning for a free ride. Life-long friends never forget these things.

One of Norman's earliest ventures was to build and operate a potato chip factory next to the Holland Railroad Station. This was when Northampton farmers were producing great crops of potatoes. He also produced horseradish. Citadel Security Systems occupies the property today.



Norman, about the time he graduated from college in 1935.



Hilda (Smith) and Norman Turner. Hilda was an accomplished pianist. She played at Addisville Reformed Church.

Richboro was growing in the early 1950's and Norman realized the need for more local shops, so he built a shopping center south of his house on Bustleton Pike in an area that not many years before had been a cow pasture. At first, it was just four stores and later became the long line of shops we know today. There have been many shops there over the years, including a drug store, bakeshop, cleaners, Post Office and many will remember "The Bee" a restaurant which is now Jake's Eatery. Most residents have seen Norman cleaning up his shopping center each day. He played an active role in his businesses and his tenants were always happy to see their landlord. Norm owned much of the town of Richboro at one time. He was very savvy at knowing when to buy and sell and he enjoyed it immensely. Nancy Turner recalls her father putting his children to work, stripping, painting, and cleaning his real estate purchases.

In talking with Norman, I also learned that he enjoyed playing golf.

Norman dedicated countless hours to many organizations in the community. He and his wife were life-long members of the Addisville Reformed Church and both received silver platters. He also belonged to the Odd Fellows Lodge (building now, gone) located across from the Bash Barber Shop. Norman was also a sustaining member of the Northampton Township Historical Society. He served on the board of the North East Federal Savings and Loan, now known, as Bank of America. He served as president and member of the Board of Managers of Union Cemetery. He was a member of the Northampton Township Business and Professional Association and was the recipient of the "Business Person of the Year" award in the late 1990's. He supported the Northampton Lions Club, the Council Rock Kiwanis Club, the Bucks County Boy Scouts of America and many Council Rock and Northampton Township youth organizations.

Norman passed away on January 27, 2006, at the age of 92. He is buried along with his wife Hilda in Union Cemetery, Richboro.

Norman will be remembered for his energy and steadfast presence in Richboro, and the Northampton Township communities. He will be deeply missed by his family and all who knew and respected him.

THANK YOU, NORMAN, you loved your town and we loved you.

We originally intended to publish this story on Norman's life by Betty Luff before his death but unfortunately that was not possible. Norman Turner was an important part of Richboro's history. I only wish he had the opportunity to see this HISTORIA but then I am sure he has, as he will always look over his town of Richboro!



**Norm with his buddy, Cody,
his daughter, Nancy's dog, in her kitchen.**



*The Newtown Richboro Road
Photograph taken by Harvey
Jan. 1. 1953
Prints by Peggy & Bill.
Your busses must travel
This many times each
school day. We extend the
'Seasons Greetings' Harold & Esther
Weir.*

**Christmas card with text from backside, sent to the
Turners from the Weirs. Taken by Harvey Weir
shortly before his death in a plane crash.**



**Dr. Cameron Wilson and Norman Turner, December
2005 at Clearview Nursing home.**

In early December 2005, I took Dr. Cameron Wilson to visit Norm at the Clearview Nursing Center on Twiningford Road. I wish I had taken a video camera or tape recorder as the two Richboro natives talked at length about their memories of the past.

Camie remembers his father purchasing a truck body from the Turner Body Works to make a trailer that they used to haul tomatoes to the Campbell Soup Company. Later as a veterinarian, he was always breaking a 'dehorner' used to remove the horns from calves. Fred Turner fixed it for him using wagon wheel spokes and to this day, he still has it. Camie misses the talks he had with Norm at the Richboro Post Office and their bi-weekly poker games in Norm's basement. Norm had a basement room added with a wood burning stove just for their social group. Jimmy Mclean, Scott Gormley, Raleigh Dennis were among those that regularly attended.

I was so glad that both Camie Wilson and I were able to see Norm one last time.

Doug Crompton

Harry Berry, Jr.

(1923 - 2006)



We are deeply saddened to report the passing of Historical Society member Harry Berry, Jr., on January 22, 2006. Mr Berry, 83, of Newtown, Pa. passed away peacefully at St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne surrounded by his loving family. Son of the late Harry Sr. and Ida Hendrixson Berry and brother of the late Elizabeth Blankley. He is survived by his beloved wife, Edith A. Muller Berry, with whom he shared 61 wonderful years of marriage; his son and daughter-inlaw, Harry E. and Ann Berry of Phoenix, Md.; his daughter, Linda J. Berry of East Petersburg, Pa.; his sisters and their spouses, Florence and Wesley Jennings of Southampton, N.J., Evelyn and Paul Wolfert of Cambridge, Md.; his brother-in-law Joseph

Blankley and his wife Patty of Cambridge, Md.; his brotherin-law and sister-in-law, F. Edward and "Mitzi" Muller of Eagles Mere, Pa.; and four granddaughters, Brigitte Osborne of Austin, Tex. Allison Berry of Washington, D.C., Courtney Berry of New York City, and Jessica Berry LeMin of East Petersburg, Pa.

Mr. Berry was one of these rare individuals with a genuine interest in everything and everyone. He attended Temple University on a scholarship. As part of his Navy assignments he also attended Wharton Business School and Harvard University. He was in the U.S. Navy during World War II and after five years was discharged as a Lieutenant J.G. After the war he began his business, Mr. Forms Corp. where for more than 30 years he designed and sold business forms and systems. He was an active member of the National Business Forms Association. Mr. Berry was au dedicated member of the North & Southampton Reformed Church where he served as an Elder, volunteered with Aid for Friends and was a member of the Men's Bible Class. His, interest in history and genealogy lead to his membership in the Baronial Order of the Magna Carta, presidency in the dubious Family/Huguenot Society, and Northampton Historic Society.

He also was a member of the Newtown American Legion Post, The Woodside Masonic Lodge, and the Newtown Exchange Club. A lifetime lover of music, Harry most recently played guitar with the guitar group at Church. Harry's hobbies revolved around family and friends. Travel destinations usually included locations rich in nature and history with a. special interest in the Elderhostel trips. He loved, picnics and especially enjoyed cooking meals over an open fire so that all could share the food and fun. Harry spoke on the Tylers and Tyler park at one of our past meetings. He and his wife, Edith, regularly attended the society's meeting and events and he will be greatly missed by our members.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, January 25, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at North and Southampton Reformed Church. A private interment will be held at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, the family, kindly requests that you remember Harry through a gift to the North and Southampton Reformed Church.

Northampton Township Historical Society Treasurer's Annual Report 2004-2005

Summary of Assets:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| General Funds | \$7,449.12 |
| Capital Funds | \$50,896.98 |
| Community Development Grant 2 | \$5,130.08 |
| Holzwarth Annual Dinner Fund | <u>\$4,272.99</u> |
| Total: | \$67,749.17 |

Revenues:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Membership Dues | \$2,580.00 |
| Fund Raising and Donations | \$566.46 |
| Interest (2005 Tax Year) | <u>\$1790.04</u> |
| Total | \$4,936.50 |

Expenditures:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Guest Speakers – General Meetings | \$300.00 |
| General Meetings – Refreshments | \$28.70 |
| Fund Raising | \$195.28 |
| Insurance | \$464.00 |
| Office Supplies | \$70.10 |
| Postal Service | \$275.00 |
| Printing of Historia | \$470.49 |
| Annual Holzwarth Dinner | \$1,549.50 |
| Bank Fees | \$35.00 |
| Other | <u>\$355.35</u> |
| Total: | 3743.42 |

Submitted by,
Michael Tomkins

Birthday Party in June

Tom Baust, the new owner of the historic home at 115 Middle Holland Road, Holland, will be holding a birthday party celebrating the 200th anniversary of his home on June 3 with a raindate of June 4. Tom has invited NTHS members to his home at noon for a private house tour of the first floor in advance of the public. Tom is planning a flag raising ceremony, a house naming ceremony, several music groups, a few historic antiques on exhibit by Sanger and Scheartz Antiques, and reenactors from the "Second Pennsylvania Regiment of the Continental Line." Invitations and information will follow at a later date.



NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 732, RICHBORO, PENNSYLVANIA 18954-0732

www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org

2006 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| President | Mary Seader | 215-355-4467 tiogacbnrjs@aol.com |
| Vice President | Pat Komelasky | 215-355-0649 gkomelasky@comcast.net |
| Secretary | Sylvia Amato | CAmato@voicenet.com |
| Treasurer | Michael Tomkins | 215-504-1998 michaeltomkins@comcast.net |
| Membership | Doug Crompton | 215-355-5307 doug@crompton.com |
| Ways and Means | Vacant | |
| Social Committee | Pat Komelasky | 215-355-0649 gkomelasky@comcast.net |
| Director (Past Pres.) | Doug Crompton | 215-355-5307 doug@crompton.com |
| Director | Jean Gallagher | 215-968-5222 |
| Director | Christine Fluehr | 215-579-4334 chris@fluehr.com |
| Director | Betty Luff | 215-357-3767 |
| HISTORIA Editor | Doug Crompton | 215-355-5307 doug@crompton.com |

HISTORIA is published quarterly by the Northampton Township Historical Society. The Society meets four times each year at the Northampton Township Cultural Center, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. Meetings start at 7:30 PM with refreshments, general meeting, and a featured speaker. For more information visit our web page or e-mail us at nths@NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org. Past issues of the HISTORIA, in color, are available on our web page www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org. The HISTORIA is edited by Doug Crompton. Articles are always welcome.

Meeting Dates for 2006

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------|---------|
| March 22 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| May 17 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| September 20 | General Meeting | 7:30 PM |
| November 15 | Dinner Meeting | 6:30 PM |

Board Meetings 2006

February 8, April 12,
August 9, October 11
7 PM - Call for location

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 2006 (January 2006 to December 2006)

INDIVIDUAL - \$15 SENIOR - \$10 STUDENT - \$10 SPONSOR - \$100 PATRON - \$250 (5 year membership)
FAMILY - \$20 SUSTAINING - \$50 NTHS CIRCLE - \$500 or greater (Life membership)

Note - Applications received after October 31 will be credited for the following year. This application is sent with all editions of the HISTORIA. Please check your mailing label for the expiration year. Normal renewal time is the first quarter of the year or when the March HISTORIA is received. If your membership is current, please pass this application on to others who may be interested in our society. Please consider a contribution of more than the minimum membership to help defray increasing society costs.

Send to:
Northampton Township Historical Society
PO BOX 732
Richboro, PA 18954-0732

NAME: _____ Date: ____ / ____ /2006 Membership Classification _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ DUES ENCLOSED: \$ _____

EMAIL: _____ Shirt Size [S] [M] [L] [EXL] - (Sponsor and higher) _____

May we count on you to serve on one of our committees? : Y ____ N ____ MAYBE ____
Please give us your ideas for speakers at future meetings : _____
Would you be willing to write an article for the HISTORIA : _____
Your comments and suggestions are welcome : _____