



The Inkwell

Sally Costik, editor



The Newsletter of the Bradford Landmark Society

April 2017

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As we welcome spring, the level of activity at the Bradford Landmark Society increases. The Crook Farm awakens from its winter's sleep and Board members and volunteers begin the task of getting the farm ready for a variety of events. Mowing the lawns, planting flowers, airing out the farmhouse, school, and other buildings, checking for winter damage – it all must be done. Check out our list of coming events, contained in this newsletter, to see what we mean!

Meanwhile, back at the Herbig Bakery, we've been doing "our thing" all winter long. One of our most successful projects was the rebinding of 30 of our old books – mostly City Directories, dating back to 1879. Over the years, the bindings and covers have become weak, torn, or in deplorable shape. So, thanks to a Community Improvement Grant from the Bradford Area United Way, we contacted Wert Bookbinding of Grantsville, PA (its down near Hershey) to rebind our books. We got their name from the Bradford Area Public Library. The best part? This company also works with all the local schools and libraries, here and all the way to Buffalo, rebinding text books and library books, and stopped by and picked our small bunch of books up on their way through the area and delivered them back to us when finished. No shipping costs! The books came back a month or so ago and we couldn't be more pleased with the result. We now have a complete set of city directories in good shape that can be used by researchers without fear of damaging the books. And in case you wonder, we also have a collection of city directories and other 'rare' Bradford books, put away safely in a cupboard, not readily available for public use. Some of these books are scarce, fragile, or valuable and while we encourage visitors to use our newly rebound books, we don't allow people access to our special collection.

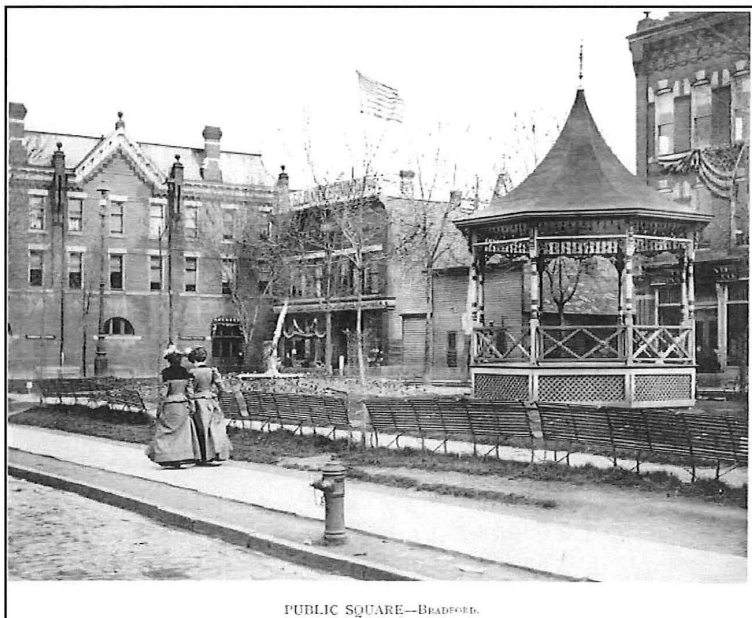
Gordon Ernest, a volunteer of the Landmark who has been working for years (yes, really!) on organizing and scanning our photograph collection, tells me that we now have 15,574 photographs scanned, and in our computer photograph files. We actually have lots more, waiting to be scanned and transferred to the master photograph computer (and our back up hard drive, which is kept in a fire proof file), and of course, people bring in photographs all the time for us to keep, or let us scan them. We tell people all the time, that we don't need the actual photograph but would love the image. It's is nice to have, but with the ability of computers to scan, enhance, and store unlimited photographs, we've found that people who want to keep the real thing are more than willing to let us capture the image for history's sake.

The Beginning of Bradford's "Square"

We didn't always have a public square. Back in 1879, when this article appeared in the Bradford Era, the area now known as Veterans Square was really nothing more than an open piece of ground surrounded by old wooden buildings. What a change in 138 years!

The Bradford Era, May 9, 1879 - The building, formerly used as the Burgess' office in the public square, has been moved back and the other buildings are being dismantled, preparatory to being taken away. The new hotel (note to 2017 readers, this will be the St. James) will be commenced immediately. In this connection, we would like to speak of the public square, or park, at the head of Main Street. As it is now, it is but a barren waste of dirt, hay scales, liberty pole, and mud holes – a tract of land in the midst of business blocks – which contains nothing to please the eye, and is of no possible use.

We think it belongs to the city. In that case, why not make an appropriation for its improvement. Put an iron fence around, sod the ground, and lay it out in gravel walks and greensward. Plant trees and construct a fountain in the center. It would be of wonderful benefit to the city as a pleasure resort; it would have a tendency to attract our citizens to that end of the city and would be very beneficial in a financial point of view, to the business places which are around it. Bradford has within a few months grown to be a city of importance, and thus far there has been no place of that kind provided where our citizens can go for recreation, rest and pleasure. The walks about the city are not in excellent condition and we consider that this park would not be only an ornament to the metropolis of the oil regions but a genuine source of pleasure to our citizens generally.



This photograph was taken in 1898 – nearly 20 years after this article was written about the deplorable condition of Bradford's public square.

As you can see, the public square did undergo a transformation, from grass, benches, a gazebo, flag pole, and sidewalks.

Coming Events

at the Bradford Landmark Society.
You won't want to miss them!



(There will be more publicity on each event as its date draws nearer. Watch the Bradford Era and social media for more info.)

May 7 - **BAKIN' AT THE BAKERY** - at the Herbig Bakery, 45 East Corydon Street. Come celebrate with us as we turn back the clock and sell baked goodies at the old bakery. Sunday morning, 9AM to 1PM. Cookies, cakes, brownies – all sorts of delicious treats. Stop by after Church!

May 12 – **CROOK FARM SCHOOL PROGRAM** begins its 38th year. We have 4th and 5th grade students from Pennsylvania and New York State experience a day at the Crook Farm and school.

May 20 – Come on down to the 2nd annual **BRADFORD LANDMARK YARD SALE**, held at the Crook farm, 476 Seaward Avenue, 9AM to 5PM in the big barn. Lots of odds and ends and maybe a treasure or two!

June 3 – Tuna Valley Trails **“YA GOTTA REGATTA”** will be held at the Crook Farm STARTING AT 2:30pm. Float or paddle the "Tuna" on your seaworthy canoe, kayak, or floatation device of choice, ending at Crook Farm for a great afternoon of fun with live music and a pig roast. Donations benefit the Tuna Valley Trail Association.

June 11 – The **WNY FIDDLE KIDS** return to Bradford for a concert at the Bromeley Theater, UPB. If you've heard these amazing fiddle playing kids perform at the Crook Farm Country Fair, you know you'll want to hear them again. The WNY Fiddle Kids come from Springville, West Falls, East Concord, Hamburg and Franklinville, NY and range from age 9-18.

July 2 – Enjoy **PATRIOTIC AND POPULAR MUSIC** at a free concert at the Crook Farm, July 2nd. Last year the Twin Tiers Community Band was a smashing success. Plan on joining us this year – bring your own blankets, chairs, and a good pair of ears, because you won't want to miss hearing some great music. And, the Landmark will also be selling ice cream and hot dogs!

July 29 – the **CREATIVE WOMEN'S WORKSHOP** will hold its 4th annual event at the Crook farm. Open to women ages 16 and up, the workshops cover a wide and diverse group of topics, all of them fun to learn. Lunch is provided, too. Last year, over 100 women signed up.

August 26-27. The annual **CROOK FARM COUNTRY FAIR AND OLD TIME MUSIC FESTIVAL** will once again be held on Saturday and Sunday in August.

November 26, December 3, and December 10 (all Sundays) Choose one of these days to attend our annual **CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING CLASS** held at the Bank building at the Crook farm. There is a cost involved. Natural greens, ribbons, wreath frame, and lots of fun!

The Street Formerly Known As...

Remember Delevan Avenue? How about Palmer Avenue? Campbell Alley? No? How about Ice Street, Leon Street, Church Street, or McKean Street? Still nothing? Well, you might be surprised to learn that all these streets were – actually still are – part of the Bradford city street grid. The names have been changed, that's all. Bradford residents have a predilection for renaming the very streets they live on. And it's been going on for years.

Let's take Delevan Avenue. Today it's known as Clinton Street. It was renamed in February 1919 when its residents came before City Council and asked politely if the name of their street could be changed. But here's the twist – the name of Delevan had only been in existence since 1911. The street used to be called Clarence Place. Seems like the residents didn't that name either, and changed Clarence Place to Delevan Avenue in April 1911. Fussy people, weren't they?

Sometimes there are good reasons to rename a street. Two streets become joined together, for example, when a new road is opened or it just makes more sense. A good example is Barbour and Brookline Streets which were combined into one Barbour Street in May 1900.

Sometimes the street is renamed forming two new streets, too. For example, Mechanic Street used to go clear through town out to the city limits. Legend has it that the wealthy oilmen who were building homes on the south side of town didn't want a common name like "Mechanic" to be their address. South Avenue sounded so much classier. So, it was renamed in 1898. A portion of the old Mechanic Street was designated South Avenue from Corydon Street to the south city line, and then another section renamed in 1904 to include that part between Main and Corydon. Now Mechanic Street just runs from Veterans Square up to School Street.

Streets were renamed after famous people (think Marilyn Horne Way) or festivals (Webster Street was changed to Festival Way in 2002), or businesses. Leon Street (the location of the old Leon Ferenbach silk mill) was changed to Silicon Way in 1971. Durkee Alley lost its name and became Futures Way in 1990.

Some names seemed to have been changed when that portion was annexed into the city. Ice Street became Poplin Avenue. West William Street was renamed Willard Avenue. Both names were changed in early 1914. And while we're in that part of town, remember Campbell Alley? It became McCourt Place (due to no doubt, to McCourt Label factory located at its head) in November 1913.

Some streets are renamed because the old name no longer applies. Interstate Parkway, for example, used to be called Bennett Brook road. That name was changed to simply Brook Street in 1913 but renamed again when Allegany State Park was opened in 1924. The name was changed to Interstate Parkway because, after all, it ran "inter" state and went to the new park. It was dedicated in July 1924. When the high school was built in 1925, a smaller street that turned off the new Interstate Parkway was given the former name Brook Street. It still exists today.

Of course, sometimes it's hard to figure out why the street name was changed at all. What was so bad about the old name? Why did Palmer Avenue become York Street in 1916? Why was McKean Street renamed Thompson Avenue in 1889? Church Street named Welch Avenue in 1896? It's a puzzle.

But I've decided, that if the city ever wants to change the name of West Corydon, where I live, I have a perfect name for it. "Easy Street." I've always wanted to live there.

Garden Fever Grips Us All

There is an old saying: “The more things change, the more they remain the same.” How many of us gardeners feel like the optimistic man in this poem? And by the way, this poem first appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1909.

Times uncounted, without number, I have seen the lush cucumber
Painted green and fat and splendid on the box that holds the seeds.
That the corner grocer sells me and upon his honor tells me
That a few assorted packets will supply my utmost needs.

I have seen the red tomato and the fluff and fat potato
Done in most alluring colors and mouth-watering array.
And I follow each direction when I plant my radish section,
But I never raise such green stuff though I nurse it day by day.

All the luscious melons growing in the pictures that I am sowing,
For the sight of them is tempting and the size of them is vast,
And I empty out the packet as I plant the seeds and tack it
On a stick so I may verify the stuff I planted last.

But alas! Some blight will wither them and I will wander hither
In the height of melon season, as I’ve often done before.
I will find some yellow, shrunken, puny specimens of pumpkin,
Or some runty summer squashes – only these and nothing more.

My asparagus and parsley I will sow, but not too sparsely,
For the pictures on the packets are both nourishing and fine.
And the printing on the packet tells me how to cut and stack it,
How to mulch it, how to bleach it, how to trim and prune the vines;

And with tender care I place it on a loamy place and face it
To the rising sun to give it just the chance to grow it needs.
Do I reap a harvest? No, sir! I must seek the corner grocer
And buy green stuff for my table with the garden full of weeds.

Every springtime, when the tender voice of Nature croons the splendor
Of the field and of the harvest, then the fever gets on me
To go digging, hoeing, scratching, planting, pruning, garden-patching,
And the love I bear for Nature, oh, “’tis beautiful to see!

I have visions of cucumbers and my deep, soil-wearied slumbers
Are all full of corn and cabbage, dreams of crisp, fresh garden sass.
But the summer brings me sadness, for I know that my dreams were madness,
And I learn the bitter lesson that all flesh is merely grass!

Bradford Landmark Society
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The Crook Farm farmhouse and garden, summer 1980. Photographed for the Bradford Era calendar.

