Looking Forward

At last, spring is upon us. The leaves are starting to sprout, the gardens are being planted, and the flowers are, well, flowering. It’s been a long snowy winter and all of us here at the Herbig Bakery are looking forward to the rest of the year.

Lots of things are happening here at the Landmark Society, too. Each spring, the Crook Farm hosts the School Program for the 4th & 5th grade students of local schools who spend a day at the farm, going to a one room school house, learning how to do chores, watching a blacksmith, making candles, weaving – it’s all part of the Society’s mission to teach today’s children about life long ago on a typical farm in the Bradford area. The school program starts this year on May 11th, and finishes up June 5. Good luck kids, and enjoy yourselves!

And we will have a wedding this spring at the Crook Farm as well. Alison Render, daughter of John and Judyann Render of Hereford, Arizona, and Michael Cummins, son of Donald and Debbie Cummins of Bradford, are getting married at the Crook Farm on June 20. Congratulations!

A tour bus is also coming by the Farm on Monday, June 8 with about 50 senior citizens who will tour the farm, eat their lunch there, and then travel on to the Zippo Museum. Bus tours are always fun, and we hope that the Crook Farm becomes a popular spot on the tour.

This year, 2009, marks the 150th Anniversary of the Titusville oil strike at Drake’s Well, and several activities are planned locally to celebrate this momentous event in Pennsylvania history. If you have gone by the Herbig Bakery recently, you may have noticed the working oil jack in the window, surrounded by lots of oil field memorabilia and equipment. We entered the display in the Oil 150 window contest and won! The window was designed and put together by Mike Fuoco, one of our volunteers, and is a fascinating collection of local oil items.

More interesting news inside –

take a seat and enjoy this edition of *The Inkwell*!
Upcoming Events in the Bradford Area

Oak Hill Cemetery Spring Clean-Up, Saturday, May 9, 2009.
Start at 10:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Meet at the Lincoln Avenue gate (above Wright Monument Works). Wear sturdy shoes, work clothes and gloves. Hand tools are fine; however, no power tools, please. Bring lunch and beverage. Please plan on being there. We’re counting on you!

HOTAfest – Heart of the Alleghenies Folk Music and Dance Festival-at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, August 7-9, 2009.

Town Wide Garage Sale, 8 AM to 12 PM, May 23, throughout the city.
Maybe that special item you’ve been looking for is right down the street!

Farmer’s Market opens for the summer, June 20.
Held in Veterans Square, the market will run from 8 AM to 12 noon, every Saturday until September 26. Enjoy locally grown vegetables and baked goods all summer long.

30th Annual Crook Farm Fair, August 29th and August 30th.
Plan ahead for this year’s Crook Farm Fair, with all your favorite foods, vendors, music, and more! It just wouldn’t be summer without the fair.

Oil 150 Parade – August 22.
Join us on the parade route as we celebrate the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania 150 years ago.

Big 30 Parade/Pep Rally – August 1.
The traditional Pennsylvania vs. New York State high school football game at Bradford High School field is a great way to “kick off” the football season.

Italian Festival – August 13, 14, 15.
You don’t have to be Italian to enjoy all the food, music and fun at Bradford’s own Italian Festival. Held on Festival Way beside Tops Market, the festival has been part of Bradford for nearly 100 years.

The Bradford Landmark Society’s annual Patron Drive, starting July 2009.
Your support of the Bradford Landmark Society helps to fund the Crook Farm School Program, our Bi-annual Historic Lecture Series, the Crook Farm Country Fair & Craft Festival, the Christmas House Tour, research at the Herbig Bakery, education programs, and continued preservation of Bradford’s history. Watch for your membership packet in early July!
Technical Assistance Grant Awarded to the Bradford Landmark Society

The Bradford Landmark Society recently learned that we have been awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Museum and Historic Commission in Harrisburg, to provide for technical assistance in assessing our collections, evaluating our collection storage, and to give preservation recommendations.

Although no monies will be awarded, the grant provides the assistance of a skilled museum and archival technician who will visit the Landmark Society in the near future, meet with the staff at the Herbig Bakery, and suggest solutions to solve varied problems involving storage, accessions, and exhibition methods.

Our collection currently contains over 2000 photographs, maps, documents, newspapers, family histories, books, illustrations, and artifacts that contain genealogical and historical information of Bradford.

We look forward to meeting with Lynn Beman, the state appointed consultant, and will report on her recommendations in a future newsletter.

Isabelle Champlin Chosen for YWCA Award

A member of the Bradford Landmark Society and former Chairman of the Board, Isabelle Champlin, was recently recognized as a 2009 YWCA Woman Leader at a luncheon held at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford’s Mukaiyama University Room in the Frame-Westerburg Commons building.

As “one of us”, the Bradford Landmark Society extends its warmest congratulations to Isabelle, and feels that this award is long overdue.

Isabelle has been a professor of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford for 38 years. She is also currently the director of International Studies, annually leading students to Mexico and Japan. She is a member of the American Anthropological Association and the Register of Professional Archaeologists. She is also a board member of the AAUW, and the Penn-Brad Historic Oil Well Museum, and a past board member of the Friends of the Bradford Area Public Library and the Friends of the Hanley Library. She also is a member of the Tuna Valley Trails Association, and has received numerous awards and commendations for her work and contributions.

The YWCA Women leaders is an annual award presented to those women who have made a difference in the community by empowering and inspiring women and girls. The Bradford Landmark Society curator, Sally Costik, was a recipient of this award in 2001.

The 30th Annual Crook Farm Fair

is coming!

Saturday, August 29, 2009

And Sunday, August 30, 2009
One of the goals of the Bradford Landmark Society is to collect, preserve and maintain all sorts of records that reflect the history of the city of Bradford. We accomplish this goal through the acquisition of particular books, journals, reports, or registers of local businesses, organizations, or government entities or, when not permanently available, we borrow them for scanning or photographing. These early records are rare eyewitnesses to events and family history.

This past year we have been fortunate enough to gain access to two very different sources of records – early fire department books of the Bradford Fire Department, and St. Bernard’s Catholic Church records. The fire department and the church were kind enough to let us borrow their records on a temporary basis.

Father Leo Gallina of St. Bernard’s Church gave us permission to copy/scan/photograph all the records of the church in early March. There are approximately 40 books, all handwritten, covering baptisms, weddings, deaths and cemetery records. Like us, Father Gallina realizes the enormous benefit that such records will provide – to the Landmark as genealogical tools and to the church as a means of permanently protecting church information. The church knows too well the frailty of such records having lost all baptism records before 1917 in the flood of 1947.

We began with the Baptism records of 1917-1924, and were amazed to find how much these particular years reflected the Italian population in Bradford. We estimate that almost 90% of the names in that first book are Italian! Deciphering some of that early handwriting was difficult, but so far we have managed to index the names, and copy, the first three baptism books, 1917-1924, 1924-1933, and 1933-1943. This is approximately 4500 baptisms. Of course, there is confidential information in all these books, and we will not release those records to the general public. But the genealogical value is immense and although it will take us the rest of 2009 to complete the church records, it will be well worth our efforts.

The other source of records that we are working on is the fire department records. These materials are contained in journal books, and are a day to day recording of the events of the fire department – not just which fires were fought, but all sorts of mundane information as well: time off, bills paid for laundry, horse feed, fire house supplies, etc. All hand-written, of course. So far we have scanned the books dating 1887 to 1891 and 1903, and will continue to copy the records as time permits.

Surfing the Internet?

WEEKLY ROUND & SQUARE DANCE
Sponsored By The Bradford Landmark Society
http://www.bradfordlandmark.org

When: EVERY Tuesday Night 7 – 10 pm.
Admission: $3

Where: Crook Farm Homestead
Bank Building (2nd building from the road)
Seaward Avenue Ext.
Bradford, PA 16701

The Dance: This region of Western New York & Western Pa. has a rich tradition of Square & Round dances with homegrown music and calling. You can still find this type of dancing at a few local Grange Halls in the region on a Saturday night.

The Music: We welcome listeners, dancers, and musicians from the “Old Time Country” music genre. Electric instruments & drum sets are discouraged because of the acoustics in our dance hall. If you want to learn more about this type of music and dance, come on out & join the fun!

The Caller: Keith Blackmon has been calling squares in this area for more than 65 years. He has a vast and varied repertoire of traditional (Eastern) singing and patter calls to many old time dance tunes. Keith learned to call square dances when he was 14 so he could call for his High School Dances.

Our Mission: The Tuesday Nite dance is a “labor of love” by local musicians, callers & dancers. A small admission is charged at the door, but the event has become a major fund-raiser for the Bradford Landmark Society. We encourage folks to bring a dish to pass or an item to raffle off during the dance. We always have a wonderful “Cake Walk”, a couple of raffles, 50-50 drawing & we toss in some spare change for the goodies & snacks we share. This event has been an important source of income that has allowed the Landmark Society to continue the important work of keeping the local musical traditions alive and growing at the Crook Farm.

DIRECTIONS: From Rt. 219 in Bradford, PA, take the Foster Brook exit. At the bottom of the ramp, turn right and go ½ block to the stoplight. This is Seaward Avenue. Turn right on Seward; Crook Farm is approximately 1 mi. on the right. Dance is in the 2nd building in from the street (blue bank).

Coffee, tea and snacks will be available. We contribute the income from the snacks & coffee to help the Bradford Landmark Society defray expenses. You are welcome to bring a treat to share, but it is not required.

For more info. call Howard Blumenthal at 814-368-4057, or email howard@blumenthals.com
Sanborn Maps and Bradford

In 1867, a small map company, the Sanborn Map Company, began creating specialized maps for urbanized areas in the United States. The Sanborn Map Company created maps for fire insurance assessment, and within several decades became the largest and most successful American map company in the nation. Eventually, over 12,000 towns and cities from 1867 to 1970 were mapped by Sanborn. These maps were—and are—invaluable for historical research, planning, preservation, genealogical research, sociological studies and research or urban geography.

The Bradford Landmark Society is fortunate to have several original Sanborn maps of Bradford, in bound book format, including the years 1911, 1925, and 1931. All of the 1931 map books, of which we have three copies, contain updates to 1943, 1936 & 1943, and 1954. We also have two complete sets of paper copies of 1886 and 1890, which map the city as it existed in those early time periods. As you can imagine, we prize these maps for their incredible historic detail of the physical structures of Bradford in those years.

As much as we utilize these Sanborn maps, we have been aware for some time that there were other Bradford maps covering other years, mapped by Sanborn, but until very recently, we were unable to obtain copies of these special maps. Recently, however, we learned that several other years which we do not have, notably 1895, 1899, and 1905, are located in the Special Collections microfilm library at Pennsylvania State University. The library, which has an impressive collection of many Pennsylvania towns Sanborn maps, has undertaken the task of digitally scanning these maps. Eager to obtain copies of the Bradford maps that we do not have, we queried the Penn State library to learn the status of the Bradford maps, only to find that while McKean County maps are on the scan list, alphabetically they are not at the top of the list. However, the librarians told us, someone could access the maps in their microfilm library, copy them onto a jump drive, or CD, and bring them back to Bradford.

Where there is a will, there is a way. Tom Jones, one of our employees, has a friend named Joe Breston in the Penn State University area, and he prevailed upon Joe to go to Penn State, find the location of the maps, and obtain a digital copy if possible. In a scene reminiscent of Mission Impossible, Joe did just that—went to the library, found the correct maps, copied them onto a jump drive, and sent it up to us, with the 1905 map safely stored on the drive. Okay, maybe not so Mission Impossible, but Joe did come through in a really big way (it took several hours to copy all the maps) and the Bradford Landmark Society is very grateful.

Now, some historic background about Sanborn Maps

The Sanborn Company was founded in 1867 by Daniel Alfred Sanborn, a surveyor from Somerville, Massachusetts.

The Sanborn Company sent out legions of surveyors to record the building footprints and relevant details about buildings in all major urbanized areas regarding their fire liability. It was because of these details and the accuracy of the Sanborn maps, coupled with the Sanborn Company’s standardized symbolization and aesthetic appeal that made the Sanborn Company so successful and their maps so widely utilized.

The Sanborn maps themselves are large-scale lithographed street plans at a scale of 50 feet to one inch (1:600) on 21-inch by 25-inch sheets of paper. The maps were created in volumes, bound and then updated until the subsequent volume was produced. Larger cities would have multiple volumes. In between volumes, updates (new drawings of new or altered buildings or lots) were created and sent out to be pasted on top of the old maps (referred to as ‘slips’) to reduce expense and preserve accuracy.
The volumes contain an enormous amount of information. They are organized as follows: a decorative title page, an index of streets and addresses, a ‘specials’ index with the names of churches, schools, businesses, etc., and a master index indicating the entirety of the mapped area and the sheet numbers for each large-scale map (usually depicting four to six blocks) and general information such as population, economy and prevailing wind direction. The maps include outlines of each building and outbuilding, the location of windows and doors, street names, street and sidewalk widths, property boundaries, fire walls, natural features (rivers, canals, etc.), railroad corridors, building use (sometimes even particular room uses), house and block number, as well as the composition of building materials including the framing, flooring, and roofing materials, the strength of the local fire department, indications of sprinkler systems, locations of fire hydrants, location of water and gas mains and even the names of most public buildings, churches and companies. Many of the industrial sites on a map will also indicate if a night watchman was present.

Today, Sanborn maps are found primarily in the archives and special collection of town halls and public and university libraries, and remain a vital resource for people in many different fields. Historical research is the most obvious use, with the maps facilitating the study of urban growth and decline patterns, and for research into the evolution of specific buildings, sites and districts. Genealogists use the maps to locate the residences and workplaces of ancestors. Planners use the maps to study historic urban planning designs. Historic preservationists utilize the maps to understand the significance and historical evolution of buildings, including their historic uses and building materials in conservation and rehabilitation efforts. Demographers and urban geographers utilize the maps to study patterns of growth and migration of populations. One particular instance comes to mind, when the Comfort inn was being constructed in Bradford. Surveyors came into the Landmark to check the maps of that part of Bradford, looking for abandoned oil wells, water lines, and other “forgotten” structures that might adversely impact the construction of that motel.

The Sanborns are an incredible historic research tool, and we invite all those interested in the history of the city to stop into the Landmark and take a look at these wonderful maps. Maybe you will even find your house there!
The Biggest Tree in Bradford

April 24 was Arbor Day in Pennsylvania (primarily held nationwide on the last Friday in April, but dates vary in some states). Bradford is surrounded by trees, and not just those on the hillsides – we have some beautiful flowering pear tress on Main Street (which ironically, are known as Bradford pears) which are in bloom right now, and look fantastic. But what about our other trees? We don’t really have any historic trees, but several years ago Bob Harris, a local Master Gardener, took it upon himself to search out the largest, oldest tree in Bradford. With measuring tape in hand, Bob scoured the streets of Bradford, always on the lookout for the tallest tree in the city. He came in to the Herbig Bakery, headquarters of the Landmark Society, wondering if we knew, or had historic photographs of such a tree. Sadly, we did not, but Bob was undeterred. One day, from a viewpoint up on Oak Hill Cemetery, he spotted it. The tallest tree in Bradford! Its tall branches could easily be seen from the hills surrounding the city. And the search was over.

Several weeks ago, in honor of Arbor Day, I took a photograph of the ‘tallest tree’. It is located on the corner of Forman and Florence Street, right across from the back of the entrance to the post office. Drive by sometime and take a look. It’s truly a wonderful tree, and yes, it can be seen from all over Bradford (if you know where to look).

Arbor Day is a holiday in which individuals and groups are encouraged to plant trees. Arbor Day originated in Nebraska, United States and is celebrated in a number of countries.

Though it was founded officially by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska in 1872, by the end of the 1920s each state in the United States passed public laws to proclaim a certain day to be Arbor Day or Arbor and Bird Day observance. The dates differ and were established depending on climate and suitable planting times.

Birdsey Northrop of Connecticut was responsible for globalizing it when he visited Japan in 1883 and delivered his Arbor Day and Village Improvement message. In that same year, the American Forestry Association made Northrop the Chairman of the committee to campaign for Arbor Day nationwide. He also brought his enthusiasm for Arbor Day to Australia, Canada and Europe.

Arbor Day is now a holiday that has an international observance and recognition in many countries.
Bradford and the Perpetual Motion Machine

Bradfordians are unique in many ways. History has shown us to be fascinated with new ideas, interesting people, and opportunities for making money. Some of these attributes helped to shape the oil industry and claim Bradford’s place in history, but our fascination with new ideas has occasionally led us down the wrong path. Such was the case in 1897, when an enterprising man named J.M. Aldrich came to town and wowed the city with his latest invention – a gravity motor, or, as he boasted, a ‘perpetual motion machine’. By the time this story ends, Aldrich is in jail in Smethport, several of our richer Bradfordians are bilked out of money, and Bradford goes down as one of the most gullible towns in America (even *Scientific American* magazine, in July 1899, which contained an article on Aldrich’s machine, snickered over “the citizens of Bradford” who were taken in by this charming, clever, and oh so convincing con man).

![A photograph of James Aldrich’s gravity motor.](http://johnlockard.tripod.com/FreeEnergy/PerpetualMotion/Article/1899July01)
The story really starts in 1889, when James Aldrich came to Bradford with “a peculiar device that ran ... on its own power” which he showed to The Bradford Era. The staff considered it “quite a curiosity” but went no further in endorsing it. Aldrich left town, only to return again in February 1897 with another small box under his arm. Aldrich claimed this machine “solved the perplexing problem of perpetual motion” and to the casual observer, it seemed to be all that its inventor said it was. The Bradford Era was more than impressed, and ran this article in the newspaper.

The description of his gravity motor in The Bradford Era was more than enough to generate interest in Aldrich’s machine. Within a few weeks, he had succeeded in getting several of Bradford’s wealthier men to give him enough money to secure a patent with the understanding that they would hold a share of the patent when granted. As you might expect, once the money was in hand, Aldrich disappeared, taking the motor, and the money, with him.

Realizing that they had been duped, the Bradford “partners” immediately sent descriptions of the invention and Aldrich to all principal cities; finally capturing him in Ohio. Charged with obtaining money under false pretenses, he was brought back to Bradford on March 24, 1897 in the custody of Detective Parker of Cleveland. The motion machine was brought along as well, as evidence.

He was given a hearing in Bradford the next day. Bail was set at $600; but since Aldrich could not raise the money (no word on what he did with the “partners” money) he was taken to the county jail to await trial.

Soon, other news of his escapades reached Bradford, as several other towns spoke up, relating stories of Aldrich and his perpetual motion machine in their towns. Aldrich had been busy. He had “investors” in Emlenton, PA; in Cleveland, Ohio; in Sistersville, West Virginia and in Canada. The town of DuBois claimed that not only had Aldrich swindled at least five of its townsmen with promises of a machine that would “generate power at a price that would rival in cheapness that furnished by Niagara’s torrents” Aldrich, under the false name of Smith, had also robbed the hollowed out wooden leg of a retired railroad man while the man slept! Or passed out. It wasn’t clear. “Smith” got $500 from the leg, and vanished – along with his perpetual motion machine.
Meanwhile, back in Cleveland, a manufacturer named William Oelhstrom was still convinced that the perpetual motion machine could work, and was very anxious to obtain the whereabouts of the machine claiming that “it still had merit, but was dangerous in the hands of a man of Aldrich’s caliber”.

Eventually, Aldrich was released from jail after a few months, due to lack of real evidence and perhaps an unwillingness of Bradford’s “investors” to be known as easy marks. He left town, no doubt to seek other investors who wanted to get rich quick. There is no knowledge of what happened to ‘our’ perpetual motion machine – a device that The Bradford Era finally ended up calling “Perpetual Bunco”.

And now, the rest of the story.

Two years later, H.D. Jones wrote an article in Scientific American magazine describing the perpetual motion machine. In this article, published July 1, 1899, he details the inner workings of the machine, and refers to Aldrich serving time in Auburn Prison in New York State. Part of this article follows:

By the courtesy of a correspondent in Bradford, Pennsylvania, we are enabled to present illustrations of one of the neatest perpetual motion frauds that ever drew money from a credulous public or gained for its author a well earned seclusion within the walls of a state prison. Some two years ago, one J.M. Aldrich exhibited to certain citizens of Bradford “a machine which he called a motor”, and on the strength of its unique performances secured several not inconsiderable sums of money from the favored few who were permitted as “parties of the second part” to secure an interest in the invention.

Last March, however, one of his many “half interest” holders secured the model and sent it to the Patent Office, where the perpetual motion was traced to its time honored source – a concealed spring.

We can conceive it is quite possible that the builder of this “perpetual motion machine” did not set out with any deliberate intention to deceive the public. Like many another, before and since, he was doubtless attracted by this will o’ the wisp of the inventor, and started with the honest intention and expectation of building a machine which would run without the assistance of any external agency.

If he (Aldrich) had been content, as many another unfortunate had been before him, to consign his machine to the scrap heap, it would have been better for him and for his victims, but being of an ingenious and resourceful mind, and doubtless “tempted of the devil”, he conceived the idea of overcoming the troublesome friction by means of concealed clockwork, and acting upon the thought he carefully carved and whittled out the wooden bed plate of the machine and placed therein the springs and the train of gears shown in the illustrations. The model, as it stands on our office table, is certainly a masterpiece of deceptions, and eminently calculated to deceive the unwary.

With the perpetual motion so palpably accomplished, however, Mr. Aldrich saw in his creation a means of immediate if unlawful gain. Hence, three things followed: many simple people were relieved of their money; Aldrich was given space for repentance within Auburn Prison; and, the Scientific American is enabled to “point a moral and adorn a tale”, for the benefit of the all too easily snared investor.

And so, as always, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is!
Old Home Week, August 1909. It's been 100 years since the grand old home week celebration in Bradford. It was a week filled with parades (at least one every day!), visitors to Bradford, fireworks, a Ferris wheel on Kennedy Street, real Indians, an automobile parade, and fun for everyone. Each day had a theme, such as children’s day (with a parade), organizations and clubs’ day (with a parade), etc. This photograph shows the remaining Civil War veterans as they march down Main Street. It was a sight to see, all week long. Watch for a new book that chronicles this wonderful event, later this year.