



# Laurelton, PA Celebrating 200 years 1811-2011

## Part I

This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the village of Laurelton, in the West End of Union County. This occasion not only signifies the beginning of the village of Laurelton, it also marks the birth of Hartley Township. Carved from Buffalo Township in April 1811, Hartley Township can also take pride in celebrating its bicentennial this year.

To learn about the early history of Laurelton a primary source of information is the writings of the preeminent West End historian, Richard V.B. Lincoln (1822-1901). Lincoln's writings provide a priceless link to the past, as he was responsible for recording significant and important details about the pioneers who settled in this area, as well as other areas of Union County during the early 1800's.

According to Lincoln, some of the earliest settlers in what is now the village of Laurelton were families with surnames such as Copelan, Diven, Gerry, Weiker, Spear, and Preston. These families were living in what was then referred to as "Slabtown". That name was attached to the little community as it sprang up alongside Laurel Run. At that time many of these families were living in log cabins sided with slab wood.

John Copeland, a millwright, had a cabin on the west side of Laurel Run. Close by was James Diven who was a weaver by trade. John Gerry was a tailor, who according to Lincoln moved west. Samuel Weiker ran a carding and fulling mill along Laurel Run. Weiker laid out a portion of his land holdings in that vicinity into lots, which he then named "Weikerville." However, according to Lincoln, the name did not catch on and was discontinued. Robert Spear was a weaver who lived along Laurel Run and Calvin Preston was a millwright who also lived in a similar cabin nearby. No descendants of these early settlers are known to be living in that section of the county today.

Lincoln also said that the name "Eagleville" was tried, but like Weikerville, that name also failed to gain popular usage. When the post office was established in 1856 the name "Laurelton" was given to the little community that sprang up at a crossroads just west of Laurel Run.

The village of Laurelton has seen many changes over the last two centuries, not only in the arrival and departure of its inhabitants, but also in its churches, schools, the post office, mills, and businesses. As with any community there have been many ups and downs. In the next several issues we will explore some of those changes and highlight some of the people who

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# The Millmont Times

SEPTEMBER 2011

## Hartleton Mailbox by Postmaster Gail Hanselman

Did you feel the earthquake? Did you know what it was or did you think you were going crazy like I did? I didn't know that earthquakes were even a possibility here in Central Pennsylvania.

Hope all is well after hurricane Irene; we were without electricity for about 10 hrs but no damage, Thank you God! And I would also like to say a big thank you to the PPL guys out there that work so hard to get everyone's power back on after any and all natural disasters. And a big thank you to all the Red Cross people and volunteers helping the people who have had more damage than just being without electricity. God's blessing to you all.

I am so so sad!!! Summer is over...it's cooling down outside, no more 90 degree days, the nights are getting downright chilly and it gets darker sooner, Little League in Williamsport just ended and the kido's are going back to school. All sure signs that summer is over, it just doesn't last long enough :(

Talking about the kido's going back to school .... It's that time of year when the children will be up early to walk or ride bike to get to the bus stop or to school on time. It's the time of year when drivers need to remember that school buses will be making lots of stops and that children

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Michael Schnure's headstone in the Laurel Run Cemetery. The headstone is mounted on the round stone that was used in Smith's hemp mill.

were influential in Laurelton's history over the past two hundred years.

## CHURCHES

The first church established in Laurelton was a log structure erected on the east side of Laurel Run about 1814. The logs were chinked and daubed and a small stable was built adjacent to the church. Several denominations used the church in the beginning, including the Lutherans and Presbyterians. John Glover Sr. donated a parcel of land where the church was erected. In 1842 the log church was replaced with a brick structure. This church was dedicated on October 29 of that year. The land where the church was situated was subsequently deeded to the Lutheran and Reformed congregations.

On the opposite side of Laurel Road from the former Lutheran and Reformed Church is the Laurel Run Cemetery. Interred in that cemetery are the remains of some of the early residents of the section. Melchoir Smith, who died May 6, 1816 at age 64, is buried in there. According to Lincoln, Melchior Smith and his family settled in the area north of Laurelton about 1792.

One of the unique headstones in this cemetery is that of Michael Schnure (1808-1878).

Schnure's headstone is sitting atop the round stone that was used in the hemp mill operated by his father-in-law, Melchior Smith Jr. That mill was located adjacent to Laurel Run, north of the village of Laurelton, in the vicinity of Hoover Lane.

Michael's son, Rev. Charles Schnure was the pastor at the Lutheran churches in Laurelton and Hartleton when he surrendered to the call to go into the mission field to India. A compelling story of Rev. Schnure and his wife, Mary (De Hass) Schnure, and their service in India was featured in the June 2009 issue of The Millmont Times.

In 1876 congregants worshipping during the Reformed Church services broke away from the Lutherans and erected their own church adjacent to the home at 1825 State Route 235, in the village of Laurelton. That church was dedicated on March 12, 1876. A belfry was added to the church in 1903. The bell in that belfry was provided courtesy of Dr. George C. Mohn. The church was remodeled in 1927. In 1934 the Reformed Church merged with the Evangelical denomination to form the Evangelical and Reformed. Further merger in 1957 created the United Church of Christ. Today the Laurelton Reformed Church located in Laurelton is known as the Ebenezer United Church of Christ.

Following the split the Lutheran's retained sole possession of the church off Laurel Road. The Lutheran's dismantled their old edifice and built a new brick church.

The Lutheran congregations worshipping at Laurelton, Hartleton, Swengel, and Ray's later merged into one when members voted to consolidate into one new church. That church was built at 13765 Old Turnpike Road, and was named Christ's United Lutheran Church. It is often referred to as the "Four Bells Church" because the tower adjacent to the church holds the bells from the four merged churches.

The Laurelton Lutheran Church located at 2360 Laurel Road was sold following the merger and significant alterations were made to the church as it was converted into a single-family dwelling.



The Ebenezer United Church of Christ in Laurelton began when the Reformed congregation broke away from the Lutheran Church in 1876.

## SCHOOLS

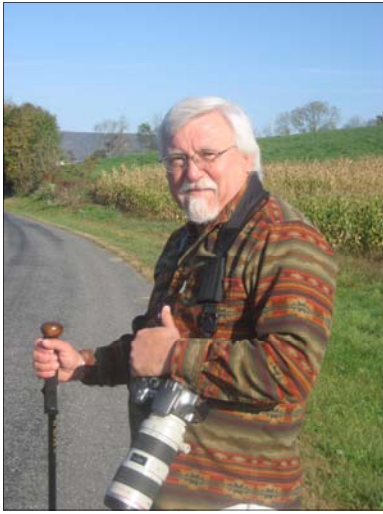
The earliest schoolhouse built in Laurelton was similar to many of the dwellings located in the village at that time and was located on the hillside adjacent to the church off Laurel Road. Lincoln's description of that early schoolhouse is as follows: "...on the hill east of the Laurelton church of the regulation style, viz., a log building, clapboard roof, long low windows, slab or plank benches, and desks for writing around the sides of the building. This school house on the hill was used for school purposes until 1842, when, upon adoption of the free or common school system, it was superseded by a better one on the same lot west of the church".

There was a school located at Halfpenny's Winfield Woolen Mill (north of the fairgrounds) that was built in 1854. This school relieved the overcrowding at the one in Laurelton and was more accommodating for the children whose parents worked at the factory. When the factory burned in 1866 and production was moved to Lewisburg the schoolhouse remained in use. This school was closed in 1884 when a new brick schoolhouse was built in Laurelton. That schoolhouse, located at

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# BIRD TALK

by Jim McCormick



As summer draws to an end, I breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the stifling heat is near its end. Finally I can leave the windows open at night, a rare event this summer. Many of the roadside wildflowers are starting to go to seed, but there are still a few blooming Thistles around and the Goldenrod is just starting to turn from green to a hint of the golden-yellow it will become. Penns Creek is alive with Purple Loosestrife crowding the riverbanks and covering many of the islands with its beautiful purple hue. As I wrote some years ago, I was disappointed to learn that this beautiful flowering plant is an intrusive non-native plant that is crowding out much of the native vegetation, but it does add a splash of color to late summer! There is another non-native plant that can be seen now in open fields and along the road--Common Teasel. It is a rather unusual flowering plant that can grow to over six feet in height and has an egg-shaped flower with four pointed bracts surrounding it. It was introduced by the early settlers and was used in Europe by cloth makers to bring out a lustrous shiny polish to certain cloths. There are many links to this plant on the internet, and I even found one for an herbalist that was recommending a tincture of the root to treat Lyme disease, a very nasty disease that causes severe suffering for those infected by deer tick bites. Teasel is very common in our area and the dried plant is sometimes used in flower arrangements.

August is a very slow month for bird watching; breeding is over and much of their activity seems to be taking place in secret. As I was walking late in the month, I heard a group of Blue Jays calling back and forth and I realized I had rarely seen or heard them all summer long. It's funny how you don't even miss something until you are reminded like that. Blue Jays are common all winter long and can be quite boisterous, so you can't help but be aware of them, but during breeding season they virtually disappear. Another bird I had not seen all season this year was the Green Herons; I was just starting to wonder if I would see them at all this year. I sometimes see them in May or June and then not again until late August into September. I did finally see one criss crossing Penns



Photograph of Common Teasel, courtesy of Jim McCormick.



Photograph of Common Merganser (hen) courtesy of Jim McCormick.

Creek this past week, however. The Great Egrets are completely missing this season. I have watched them for some years now and was amazed to see them come so far north. For many years they have bred in a rookery on Wade Island near downtown Harrisburg and beginning in early August they would migrate up the Susquehanna and Juniata to feed until they were ready to migrate to more southern regions. This year I have not seen a single one in Penns Creek and I have only seen a few in the Susquehanna. Earlier in the summer I had looked for them at their rookery, but did not see any. The only other rookery in Pennsylvania is at Kiwanis Lake in the city of York, which has a growing population; maybe the Wade Island group is moving south. I am now looking forward to the cool evenings of September and the appearance of all the migrating birds heading south.

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will be crossing streets, maybe crossing in not so safe places like from between parked cars instead of cross walks. Praying for a safe, happy and healthy 2011-2012 school year!

New Stamps coming in September at a Post Office near you: September 14, Lady Liberty and U.S. Flag- available on a double-sided booklet of 20, previously available in a coil of 100; September 16, Barbara Jordan- available on a pane of 20, Black Heritage stamp; September 20, Save Vanishing Species- available on a pane of 20, 55 cents each or a sheet for \$11.00. The Postal Service will transfer the net proceeds from the sale of this stamp to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

All post offices will be closed on Monday September 5, 2011 in honor of Labor Day.

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Below are listed some of the known teachers who taught at the Hartley Township High School. Some of these names were taken from records of the HTHS Alumni Committee.

Aumiller, Glenn  
Bingaman, Luther  
Blackwell, J. Harry  
Boggess, Paul W.  
Bowersox, Nellie Johnson  
Burns, Ben F.  
Burrage, Robert  
Dreibelbis, Ralph  
Fairheller, Merrill  
Fetterolf, Robert  
Greene, Yagel Margeurite  
Hackenburg, Martha  
Hamblin, Clarissa  
Hines, Myrna  
Huntingdon, Miles  
Irwin, William  
Johnson, Albert  
Leshner, Curtis C.  
Moyer, Miriam  
Musser, Harold  
Noack, Rexford  
Peterson, Jean  
Pollock, Mary  
Pursley, Louis  
Reamer, Paul  
Reitz, William  
Sanders, Harry  
Shambaugh, Jesse  
Shannon, Thomas  
Shaw, Nelson  
Showalter, Harry  
Showalter, Thelma  
Stapelton, D. P.  
Stettler, Thomas  
Wagner, Alvin  
Waterbury, Martha Von-Neida  
Weaver, Miriam  
Williams, Ruth  
Winters, Ethel  
Yohe, Kathryn Ditzler

1750 State Route 235, was closed at the end of the 1948 school year. The former schoolhouse was subsequently utilized by Harold Klauger as an appliance store. Later it was converted into a multi-family unit.

Originally the brick school was a one-story structure. In 1905 a second floor and a new entrance were added to the building. The first commencement exercise for Hartley Township High School graduates was held on April 8, 1905 at the Reformed Church. A newspaper account of that event stated: "Laurelton was all aglow on Saturday evening, April 8, because of the happy event of the first graduating exercises of the Hartley Township High School. Sufficient room could not be found to contain all who wished to witness these exercises in the Reformed Church".

Curtis C. Leshner was the first principal of the high school. Hartley Township School directors included Dr. O. W. H. Glover, David C. Johnson, Sam Rutherford, Alanson Johnson, R. J. Bingaman, and C. M. Showalter. The first graduating class consisted of eight students: Florence May Shirk, Rhoda Elizabeth Sampsell, Jesse Charles Harter, Flora May Fessenden, Carrie Byers Charles, Miriam Braucher Rutherford, Myrtle Lincoln Barnitz, and Charles Francis Weidensaul.

In 1911 Laurelton celebrated their centennial anniversary. That was the same year Grace Leoda Shirk, daughter of Abraham and Ellen (Stover) Shirk graduated from Hartley Township High School. The signatures on her diploma, dated March 31, 1911, reveal that D. P. Stapelton was then principal. School Directors included Martin J. Emery, Dr. Oliver W. H. Glover, Clarence S. Katherman, David C. Johnson, Henry H. Herbster, and C. M. Cook.

A one-story clapboard sided school was built adjacent to the brick high school. This was used as a grammar or elementary school while the brick schoolhouse was used exclusively for high school students.

In the 1940's school students were being transported to the elementary and high school in Laurelton by buses driven by Jim Bingaman, Donald Zimmerman, Pierce Feaster, and Mike Shirk. As transportation in the district improved, the one-room schoolhouses in the outlying areas of Hartley Township were closed. Several of those vacant schoolhouses were razed and the lumber was brought to Laurelton where additional classroom space was added to the existing elementary school.

The last class to graduate from the Laurelton High School was in 1948. Students in that class were: Eleanor Hoffman, Miriam Schell, Dorothy Gross, Peggy Saugher, Jean Lukens, Shirley Benner, Clair Katherman, David Hoffmaster, and Roger Zimmerman. Beginning in the late summer of 1948, students from Hartley Township attending grades nine through twelve were bused to the Mifflinburg High School.

Betty (Boop) Shively of Millmont recalled attending both the Laurelton Elementary School and the Hartley Township High School from 1938 until 1948. Teachers at the elementary school were Amelia (Schell) Schnure (first and second grades), Harry Bingaman (third and fourth grades), and Francis Bingaman (fifth and sixth grades). Shively went to the Hartley Township High School for grades seven through ten. Her teachers were Mayeva Fetterolf (seventh and eighth) and Mary Pollock (ninth and tenth). Her junior and senior years were spent at Mifflinburg High School where she graduated in 1950.

Consolidation of all of the one-room schools in Lewis and Hartley Townships and the Hartleton Borough occurred in 1953. A new one-story brick elementary school was constructed and dedicated on September 18, 1953. This school served the educational needs of the West End community for generations (57 years). Despite objections from parents, on June 14, 2011, members of the Mifflinburg School Board voted to close Laurelton Elementary effective July 1. Students, some traveling from as far as Weikert and Lindale, will now be bused to and from Mifflinburg.

Darwin Allen Johnson (1914-2000), the son of Ernest D. and Grayce A. (Allen) Johnson, was instrumental in organizing the annual Hartley Township High School Reunion. The first reunion was held in 1968 at Lincoln Park, coinciding with the annual Union County West End Fair. At that time (1968) Johnson, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel was living in Fairfield, California.

After contacting classmates and graduates he was able to garner sufficient interest and support in his effort to organize the Hartley Township High School Reunion. That year a banquet was held at the Union County Sportsmen's Club where ninety-two graduates, attendees, and family members were present. Following the success of that first year the reunion has been an annual event. This year (2011) the Hartley Township High School Reunion will be held at the community center in Laurelton on Saturday, September 10 beginning at 12:30 p.m.

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## POST OFFICE

Samuel Weidensaul was Laurelton's first postmaster. He was appointed in 1856. According to Lincoln the name "Laurelton" was given to the little community at the suggestion of Henry W. Crotzer. Crotzer was then postmaster at Lewisburg and it was through his efforts that a post office was established in the village.

The mail for Laurelton was originally brought by two-horse stage and dropped off at Hartleton before the coach driver continued westward through the narrows into Centre County. As a result someone had to transport the mail from Hartleton to Laurelton and vice versa. Since mail delivery was not timely, this proved to be unsatisfactory to the citizens of Laurelton.

Mark Halfpenny, owner of the woolen factory north of Laurelton, was particularly unhappy with the mail service, both for himself and for his business. With the incoming Republican administration in 1861 Halfpenny went to extraordinary efforts to have the post office relocated to the site of his woolen mill on the west side of Fairground Road, near what is today Hoover Lane.

Following a destructive fire at his woolen mill in 1866, Halfpenny moved his operation to Lewisburg, which precipitated his resignation as postmaster. Halfpenny's successor was John Diehl, who subsequently moved the post office into the village of Laurelton.

With the advance of the railroad through the West End of Union County in the mid and late 1870's a faster mail delivery method was established. Incoming and outgoing mail for Laurelton was transported by rail rather than stagecoach. With the opening of the depot at Glen Iron mail was dropped off at that location and individuals were hired to transport the mail to and from the post office to the railroad station. William Bogenreiff and his son Raymond were hack drivers for a period of time delivering mail to and from the Laurelton Post Office.

For a period of time Dr. Glover had the post office in his drug store. Glover was postmaster from 1908 until 1910. When D. R. Pursley was appointed postmaster in 1919 the office was moved to his general store at 11 Weikert Road. The office remained at that location for the next 40 years.

Groundbreaking for the present day Laurelton Post Office was held on April 19, 1961, and the building was completed on June 30. Eugene Keister of New Berlin was the contractor for the construction project. A dedication and open house was held at the new Laurelton Post Office on August 5, 1961. Helen (Pursley) Harter was then serving as postmaster, Jeanne Sampsell was the clerk in the office and Marie E. Sampsell was a substitute clerk.

## FOUNDRIES

According to Lincoln, Daniel Hunsicker was operating a foundry in Laurelton around 1843. Products manufactured at that foundry included plows, clover hullers, and stoves. Hunsicker was succeeded by Church & Forrey and later by William E. Smith & Company. An advertisement for Smith & Co. indicated they were manufacturers of plain and ornamental iron railing, stoves, plows, and threshing machines. According to Pomeroy's & Beers atlas published in 1868 this foundry was located alongside Laurel Run just south of the bridge on Laurel Road. It was destroyed by fire.

Years later another foundry was started by Samuel H. Bingaman further south in the village. That foundry was located where the Hartley Township maintenance building is located today. This operation was on a larger scale and was subsequently operated

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## POSTMASTERS and their appointment dates from 1856-2011

Samuel Weidensaul – January 29, 1856  
Mark Halfpenny – May 30, 1861  
John Diehl – May 7, 1867  
Charles Haas – March 5, 1875  
Daniel R. Smith – July 3, 1882  
Amos B. Fauver – February 10, 1886  
Dr. George C. Mohn – March 26, 1889  
Albright J. Bingaman – July 8, 1893  
John M. Rutherford – June 25, 1897  
Oliver W. H., Glover – March 17, 1908  
Frank B. Schnure – May 2, 1910  
Aaron L. Reedy – February 20, 1915  
David R. Pursley – 1919  
Helen P. Harter (A) – October 12, 1933  
Helen P. Harter - June 18, 1934  
Jeanne Z. Sampsell (A) – December 30, 1963  
Jeanne Z. Sampsell - June 11, 1965  
Linda K. Mitchell (OIC) - September 29, 1992  
Mary Ritzman (OIC) - March 20, 1993  
Linda Mitchell (OIC) - May 5, 1993  
Denise E. Zerbe - October 16, 1993  
Shelley Knepp (OIC) - October 5, 1999  
Loiuse M. VonNeida - March 25, 2000  
Patricia Witmer (OIC) - January 28, 2011  
(A) - Acting Postmaster  
(OIC) - Officer in Charge



## Field Notes, by WCO Dirk Remensnyder

It was commissioning day for my newest deputy. After 16 long months he was ready to stand in front of the district justice while his family and co-workers looked on as he was sworn in. All officers were dressed in their finest and looked good. As the district justice read the oath of office I couldn't help but notice his nose twitching. Even though we all looked good LES Macklem had previously handled a young bobcat, which was transferred to an approved facility. Unfortunately the cat wet all over him. I wonder if the district justice's nose was able to pick out the real culprit among us.

I recently had to go and pick up a dead Great Blue Heron which had broken both legs after a less than graceful landing.

# Biography of David R. “Pete” Pursley



David R. “Pete” Pursley courtesy of  
Doug and Sharon (Sampsell) Denisen.

One of Laurelton’s most recognizable inhabitants was David R. “Pete” Pursley. He was for many years a well-known merchant in the village. However, he was also involved in a myriad of other things throughout his lifetime. Pete assisted his father at the West End Hotel for a number of years. In the 1900 census he listed his occupation as “Hotel Landlord”. According to the mercantile listing in a local newspaper, Pete was operating a cigar store in Laurelton in 1906 and 1907. He retailed lumber and was also a building contractor. He served as Union County Commissioner, was appointed postmaster at Laurelton, and was elected associate judge of Union County. He was an interesting and unique individual who undoubtedly impacted the lives of many people in Laurelton, the West End, and throughout the county.

Born on January 4, 1874, David was the son of James and Sarah F. Pursley. James Pursley (1844-1924) was a native of the Tight End, and a veteran of the Civil War. His ancestors were some of the early settlers in that section of the county. James and his family moved from Weikert to Laurelton where he began operating the West End Hotel sometime in the early 1890’s. James was married to the former Sarah Swenk (1852-1933), and together they had eight children: Mary Ellen, Minnie, David Reed “Pete”, William, Lida, Sarah, James G., and H. Robert.

Around 1910 Pete Pursley took over the large brick store located at 11 Weikert Road. It was during his ownership of the general store, at the busy crossroads in the heart of Laurelton, that he became familiar with a multitude of people, and they in turn learned to know Pete Pursley.

Ardent supporters of the Democrat party, the Pursley’s were actively involved in politics. James Pursley served as Union County Commissioner from 1897-1900. His son, Pete had similar aspirations and served in the same post from 1912 until 1916. The younger Pursley was elected associate judge in Union County in the autumn of 1923, and he served in that post from 1924 through 1930.

Appointed postmaster in 1919, Pete served in that capacity for a period of years. Official U. S. Postal Service records from that era are not available so it is difficult to determine how many years Pete served as postmaster. It seems likely that when he was elected to the office of associate judge in Union County he would have surrendered his duties as postmaster. Who served in that office between 1924 and 1933 is not known. Pete’s daughter, Helen P. Harter, was appointed acting postmaster at Laurelton in 1933, and postmaster in 1934 following the inauguration of Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt as president.

When Pennsylvania government officials was searching for an appropriate setting to construct an institution to care for feeble-minded women of childbearing age, Pete Pursley and his friend Dr. Oliver W. H. Glover joined forces in an effort to have that state institution built in the West End of Union County. The two men were instrumental in persuading officials to look at and select a section of state owned land near the entrance to the Seven-Mile-Narrows off State Route 45. Pursley was also the contractor responsible for the construction of some of the buildings at the institution. In 1927 his workers built the dairy barn, hay barn, and other farm related buildings.

Pete Pursley was an ardent hunter and outdoorsman, and served as president of the Bear Run Hunting Club for four decades. As a youngster in the 1930’s LaRue “Rat” Shirk (1916-2002) recalled spending time with Pete and his hunting companions at their cabin alongside Bear Run in western Union County. Shirk recalled how Pursley often invited friends to the cabin to hunt deer, including some rather prominent people.

One of the individuals that Pursley invited to the cabin to hunt big game was Bing Miller. During much of his career Miller played baseball with the Philadelphia Athletics (1920’s and early 1930’s). Shirk, who was a young boy during this stretch of time, was asked to accompany Pursley and his hunting companions to the Bear Run Hunting Club so he could chase deer. He said that Pete paid him \$1 a day for his services. Shirk said he enjoyed the job so much that he would have “done it for nothing”. Some of those hunting adventures to Bear Run required him to skip school, which he saw as yet another benefit to the job of trekking along the mountainsides chasing deer.

Pete Pursley was married to the former Clara E. Smith circa 1899. She was born in Kelly Township on October 25, 1874, the daughter of Abraham and Ellen (Blyler) Smith. Together they had two children, Helen and David Neil Pursley.

Helen Pursley was born January 24, 1901. She graduated from Irving College in 1921. On November 4, 1922 she married Asher J. Harter. Helen and Asher ran the family store in Laurelton for a period of years. Helen, as noted above, was ap-

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pointed postmaster at Laurelton in 1933. She served in that capacity until 1963.

Helen's husband, Asher J. Harter, was born November 28, 1889, the son of Howard W. and Emma Best Harter. A veteran of WWI, Asher served overseas with Co. E, 314<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He was wounded in action and was awarded the Purple Heart.

Asher and Helen had no children. Helen died June 18, 1970 and Asher died January 19, 1978. They are buried in the Hartleton Cemetery.

David "Neil" Pursley was born August 10, 1909. He graduated from the Hartley Township High School with the Class of 1929. After graduating high school he attended Bucknell University. He subsequently attended Eckels Embalming College in Philadelphia. Following graduation from Eckels he spent two years apprenticing with a mortician in Mifflinburg before opening his own establishment in Lewisburg.

On March 24, 1933, Neil married the former Mildred Gommer. In 1944 he entered the military where he served in the Navy. Discharged in 1946 he returned to his mortician business. He sold his business to Raymond C. Erdley in 1947.

David Neil Pursley died July 31, 1948 as the result of injuries he sustained in an automobile accident at the railroad viaduct on Route 405 near Chillisquaque, ten days shy of his 39th birthday. David Neil and Mildred Pursley had one son, David R. Pursley.

Clara (Smith) Pursley died October 29, 1950. She was a long time member of the Laurelton Lutheran Church and was active in the affairs in her community. She was a charter member of the Laurelton Women's Club. She also held memberships in the Mifflinburg Chapter of Eastern Star; Mifflinburg Lodge, Rebekahs; Bloomsburg Order White Shrine; and Thomas Clapham Post Mifflinburg American Legion Auxiliary.

David R. "Pete" Pursley died February 11, 1955. His obituary noted that he was a leader in the Democrat party in the county and was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention that nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt to his first term as president. Pursley was also a close friend of Democrat U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Joseph F. Guffey, who served from 1935 until 1947. Pete and his wife hosted visits from Senator Guffey.

Pursley was one of the best-known men in Union County and enjoyed the admiration of the entire community. His store in Laurelton was the center of activity for a wide area and was a favorite meeting place for citizens of that section of the county to discuss civic problems, politics, and business. He was a member of the Laurelton Lutheran Church; Mifflinburg Lodge No. 370 Free and Accepted Masons; Williamsport Consistory; Milton Lodge B.P.O. Elks; and the Lewisburg Club.

David R. and Clara (Smith) Pursley are buried in the Hartleton Cemetery. -TLS

Editors Note: My thanks to Doug and Sharon Denisen of Florida for the photograph of Pete Pursley, and to Grace Weidensaul of Laurelton for providing information used in this article.

Other Sources: The Genealogy History of the Blyler Family 1803-1987 published by Pearl Kaler; The Mifflinburg Telegraph; information compiled by Rita J. O'Brien of San Antonio, Texas; and Emilie F. Jansma of State College and Weikert.

## Program of Events Celebrating Laurelton's Bicentennial

### Thursday September 22

Tour of historical cemetery and churches of Laurelton. At 6:00 p.m. meet at the Old Lutheran Cemetery at the intersection of Laurel Road and Ball Park Road (across from the West End Library). Will be visiting the Ebenezer United Church of Christ and ending at the Lincoln Chapel United Methodist Church, with historical gospel music and light refreshments.

### Friday September 23

Guided historical walking tours of downtown Laurelton at 5:30 p.m. (2 locations). Meet at the Laurelton Elementary School or Hartley Township Building. Come join in the walking tour and be amazed at the history of this small community.

### Saturday September 24

10:00 a.m. Laurelton Bicentennial Parade starting in Laurelton and ending at Lincoln Park (West End Fairgrounds). Join us in a fun-filled day with activities, events, & music to celebrate over 200 years, 1811-2011 of history.

- 12 noon pig butchering
- Homemade apple butter making
- Spinners and weavers
- Quilting
- Blacksmithing
- Muzzle Loader (there will be time for kids to participate)
- Trapping demonstration (including the set-ups of furs and traps)
- Carving
- Experience military demonstrations and encampment (located on the southeast side of Lincoln Park)
- Car show

Please note that some of the demonstrators will have items for sale! Also local historical memorabilia will be on display throughout Lincoln Park.

1-6:00 p.m. Music – Music – Music and More Music!!!!

1:00 p.m. Gospel Music

2:30 p.m. Blue Grass with Pat Sullivan and band

4:30 p.m. K. J. Remensnyder with a song she wrote just for this occasion....How special is that!!!

All day....Food, Food, and more Food

### Sunday September 25

12 noon Food stands open

2:00 p.m. Vesper Services will be lead by John Lee who portrays a Civil War Chaplain.

Free Will Offering

Each Day - Free Admission \*  
Free Parking \* Rain or Shine

The small photograph in the upper left hand corner of page one shows a view of the Laurelton Lutheran Church situated on the hillside off Laurel Road. Built c 1876, this was the third church built at that site. This building has since been converted into a single family dwelling.

## Recipe of the Month

### by Janice (Dorman) Shively

### Salsa

12 C. (about 9 lb.) peeled and coarsely chopped tomatoes  
 2 C. chopped onion  
 2 C. chopped green peppers  
 1 C. (about 10) jalapeno peppers  
 1 C. sugar  
 5 oz. red wine vinegar  
 12 oz. tomato paste  
 2 T. garlic powder (or 9 cloves finely minced)  
 1 tsp. salt

Combine all ingredients in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Pour hot salsa into hot canning jars. Place lids and rings and process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes (for pints).

This was the first salsa recipe I ever made. A friend of mine from Bloomsburg, Rose Brown and her mother, Mary, shared the recipe with me about 20 years ago. We made it

together a number of times. This is a fun recipe to prepare as a team. It is time consuming, but delicious. Rose's recipe did not have sugar in it. I added it because I like a sweet salsa. I also add about 1/2 C. of chopped cilantro in the last 2 minutes of simmering. If I don't have fresh cilantro on hand then I just add it when I open the salsa.



Because I like my salsa thick, I use roma type tomatoes and when I peel them I cut them in half and scoop out the seeds. Then I place the diced tomatoes in a strainer to eliminate some of the juice. I let them drain while preparing the onions, peppers and garlic. By the way, to simplify things, I "chop" the onions, peppers and garlic in the food processor! It's a time saver.

This recipe makes about 8 pints of salsa.  
**ENJOY!**

### 5 Generations



Hommel, is Eleanor Koonsman of Mifflinburg.

Standing left to right: Grandmother Stacy Boop of Millmont, great-grandfather Ronald Koonsman Sr. of Harleton, and father Dylan Hommel. Holding her great-great-granddaughter, Chloe

### CORRECTION

On page 6 of the August 2011 issue of the newsletter I published an article about the Shirk Family. In that article I mentioned Leroy Sanford "Mike" Shirk, the youngest of Samuel and Mary Shirk's children who was born in 1893. He was married to the former Susie E. Dauberman. They were married for more than 50 years and were the parents of four daughters and one son. Their children were Caroline, Hazel, Barbara, and Robert. Unfortunately I inadvertently neglected to include Mary (Shirk) Doebler. I apologize to Mary, who is, and has been, a longtime subscriber to The Millmont Times.

### HELP WANTED

The Union County Historical Society is seeking a regular, part-time administrative assistant to work 14 hours (2 days) per week. Applicants should enjoy working with the public and handling a wide variety of assignments. Advanced computer skills and proficiency with Microsoft Office are required. The ability to organize tasks and meet deadlines is important. Experience with research, sales, and recordkeeping is helpful.

For more information on the Society, please visit our website [www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org).

Applicants should send a cover letter, with resume and list of references to Union County Historical Society, 103 S. Second Street, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

### Are You Moving?

If you are planning to move, or if your post office mailing address is about to change, please notify The Millmont Times at P. O. Box 3, Millmont, PA 17845, as soon as possible. This newsletter is distributed bulk rate each month, and therefore it will not be forwarded by the United States Postal Service to your new address. All undeliverable newsletters are disposed of by the United States Postal Service. If there are any changes in your postal mailing address you can contact me at (570) 922.4297 or you can send an email to: [tshively@dejazzd.com](mailto:tshively@dejazzd.com)

# *Penlines From my Kitchen to Yours*

by Lucy Hoover

July 15, 2011

Dawn Martin (16) of Mifflinburg is at home after having surgery in Pittsburgh.

July 17

There were visitors at church that had been at the "Buggy Maker Reunion" at Isaac and Ruth Reiff's on Friday. There were approximately 350 people at the reunion, from 13 different states.

July 22

Nephew Arliss Hoover invited some of his friends here for target practice and "Open House" in A & C Archery. His archery shop is in a room up in our barn. The boys went swimming in the neighbor's pond afterwards.

July 23

More than 200 people gathered at Allen and Marian Zimmerman from NY and PA for a "Deaf and Hard of Hearing" get together.

July 24

Jacob and Martha Horst and Nelson and Carolyn Weaver of NY were at our church.

July 28

Reuben and Nora Zimmerman of Millmont have a daughter named EllieAnna. She has eight brothers and one sister. Grandparents are Esra and Lydia Ann Zimmerman and Phares and Anna Horning. Baby EllieAnna was born on her grandmother's birthday.

August 4

Dawn Martin came home again after approximately one week. She was having complications from surgery.

August 7

We had a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party for sister Alta (Mrs. Harry Oberholtzer) of Millmont. The party was held at Zimmerman's Harness Shop. The Brubacker family and her neighbors were invited.

Adin Zimmerman was in church this morning for the first time since his surgery.

August 11

Today was school house cleaning day. Our school will begin in two weeks.

Curvin Oberholtzer, son of Harry and Alta oberholtzer, and Maureen Weaver, daughter of Luke and Vera Weaver, are published to be married September 8, 2011.

## Looking Back

The newspaper article below was originally published in the September 27, 1924 edition of the Lewisburg Saturday News.

### Laurel Park

L.E. Yagel and wife were business callers in Muncy on Monday.

J.H. Filbert, president of the Rusk Oil Company, called on friends here Monday.

According to the prophecies made by the Gypsies who passed through here on Saturday, Laurel Park is soon to have an extraordinary period of prosperity. But according to rumors, they took a great deal of our prosperity away with them.

The Laurel Park Power and Light Company has continued to give excellent service, even though the water in Penn's Creek has been rather low, thus proving that they have plenty of reserve power. Recent improvements on their dam have made this possible.

Elmer Keister brought Elmer Olmstead's mother back from the hospital on Saturday. Her recovery has been very gratifying.

The Werts and Napps visited relatives in Grampian from Friday to Monday. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Clifford and Mrs. Eda Lepley from Shamokin, Mrs. Jacob Kreisher from Hartleton and Mrs. Floyd Boyer and son from Mifflinburg called on William Shively last Sunday.

George Schnure from Glen Iron helped Clayton Boop on Monday and Tuesday to fix his car. Now it is better than new - so they say.

Fred and Lester Zimmerman and wives were at George Zimmerman's on Tuesday evening.

A four-pound eel was caught by George Zimmerman last Saturday night.

## Union County Historical Society FALL 2011 PROGRAMS

Sunday, September 11 beginning at 2:00 PM  
*Union County River Towns*

Discussion, slide show and book signing at the New Columbia Civic Center on Third Street, New Columbia. *Union County River Towns* is the newest book in the series of pictorial histories of Union County.

Author Jeannette Lasansky will present a slide show, and lead a discussion with the book's collaborators Bill Clemens, Jack Fisher, Alan Richard, Clara Shearer, Terri Stump, Ardith Wilkins, and Susan Ohl Wirth, on some of the group's finds as well as some new items discovered since the book went to press.

Audience participation is encouraged in remembering towns including Alvira, Spring Garden, Allenwood, White Deer, New Columbia, West Milton, and Winfield.

Autographed copies of *Union County River Towns* will be available for purchase.

## Millmont Fall Festival & Chicken Barbecue

The Lewis Township Village Green Recreation Association will be sponsoring a Fall Festival, Flea Market, and Chicken Barbecue in the village of Millmont on Saturday October 1. Barbecue chicken (made by the Catherman's of Spring Mills) platters (\$6.50) and halves (\$4.00) will be available. There will also be hayrides, craft items, and a cake wheel. Anyone interested in purchasing chicken barbecue tickets or setting up a stand on the Village Green should call Tom Catherman at 922-1662.

# *Blessings from the Bible*

*By Brenda Weaver*

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,  
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake  
with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,  
the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High, God is in the midst of her;  
she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.  
The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.  
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.  
Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.  
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow,  
and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.  
Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen,  
I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.”*

Psalm 46

A cancer journey almost always has unexpected twists and turns. When my husband’s cancer relapsed and started growing with new vengeance we were thrown onto a new, intense stretch of this journey. No longer did cancer feel like just a “bend in the road.” As his pain intensified and we found ourselves first in the emergency room, and then bound for Hershey Medical Center, our cancer journey magnified. Now rather than a bend it felt like a wide, slippery road descending into the unknown. I was frightened. Was the pain here to stay? Were there more treatment options? Could the immediate crisis be resolved so chemotherapy could begin again? Would we make the right decisions?

Somewhere deep below all the fearful questions was a river of calm flowing from the throne of God. One evening as several of the children and I gathered around his hospital bed, John read about it. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High, God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early.” These curious words about a river are tucked in the middle of the very comforting and poetic Psalm 46. The words fell over me like a welcome shower of grace, made even more special by my husband’s physically weakened, yet spiritually strong voice.

After he was finished reading the psalm, John talked to us about how encouraged he was by the psalm. “If you can imagine something so strong that would move the mountains into the midst of the sea—that’s strong. And we are not to fear even that, so we don’t need to be afraid now either.” We bowed our heads for family prayer time. I thought about the frightening days we’d just gone through. Why, we’d even felt an earthquake! We saw the hospital floor move with the power of the tremors from a faraway quake. Yet God was our very present help.

“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” More words of Psalm 46 comforted me. Even in the hospital room. Even with the unknowns we face. Even in the face of great trial. God is our refuge. Oh, the blessing of it! He is our refuge and strength. He is a very present help in trouble.

Ah yes, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

God, here we are. Afraid, but knowing You are in control and we don’t need to fear. Here we are trying to be still, and knowing, really KNOWING that you are God.

Be exalted in the earth. Be exalted in our lives.

Prayer for today:

*Dear Lord, Be our refuge and strength. Be our very present help in time of trouble. When the earth around us is shaking, when the waters of a great storm are roaring about us, calm us with the river that makes glad the city of God. Help us to be still and know that You are God. Be exalted in the earth. We exalt You. And thank You for Psalm 46. Amen.*

Editors note: For those of you that would like to send greeting cards to John and Brenda Weaver, their address is P.O. Box 106, Millmont PA 17845. John has been battling lymphoma since late December and recently spent eight days in Hershey Medical Center.

(Continued from page 5)



A view of the Laurelton Foundry. Photograph from the collection of Lois (Shirk) Pick of Laurelton.

by James H. Albright, John Sheats, and Aaron Reedy.

Known as the Laurelton Foundry they manufactured a wide variety of cast iron items: frying pans, manhole covers, Globe wood-burning stoves, hog troughs, weathervanes, kettles, as well as popular novelty items such as cast iron rabbits and frog doorstops. At one time the Laurelton Foundry cast the unique three-globe light standards that beautify the streets of Lewisburg. Another one of their more popular products was the Mother's Range Cook Stove.

A letterhead shows that Aaron Reedy was President, O.W.H. Glover was Vice President, Ray H. Shirk was treasurer, and J. K. Dunkelberger was secretary. The Laurelton Foundry was incorporated on October 8, 1920.

From 1938 until he entered military service in 1941, Bruce Shirk (1918-2011) was employed as a molder at the Laurelton Foundry. Shirk recalled as many as 30 men being employed at the foundry during the time that he worked there. The names of some of the employees include: George Hauck, Bill Schnure, Les Kerstetter, Fred Kaler, David Gross, Bruce

Schnure, Harry Pick, Chip Schell, Carl "Bup" Sampsell, Ray "Punchy" Shirk, Larue "Rat" Shirk, Percy Weidensaul, and Chas Hunter. Nearly half of these men were molders.

According to Shirk the company paid its molders only for the saleable pieces they produced. He said that on a good day he could make as much as \$3. He also recalled how busy the Laurelton State Bank was when payday rolled around at the foundry. By the time Shirk returned home to Union County following his military service in 1941 it was evident to him that business at the Laurelton Foundry was on the decline. Many of the workers at Laurelton were leaving to find better paying jobs, including a number that found employment at the Watsonstown Foundry. In 1944 the Laurelton Foundry Company was sold by Union County Sheriff A. Paul Kline to the Mifflinburg Bank and Trust, bringing to an end the long history of one of Laurelton's major employers.

Editors Note: Future issues of this newsletter will continue to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Laurelton by exploring a number of other topics, including: Mills, Laurelton Lumber Company, Stores, Doctors, Laurelton State Village, Laurelton State Bank, Shirt Factory, Corn Festival, Hotel/Taverns and more. Those who have memories of people and places in Laurelton they would like to share with the readers may do so by contacting me at the address on page 12.

-TLS

I would like to thank the following individuals for providing helpful information: Lois Pick of Laurelton; Eleanor (Hoffman) Hoy of Mifflinburg, Betty (Boop) Shively of Millmont.

Sources: Bruce Shirk; Louie "Rat" Shirk; Historical writings of Richard V.B. Lincoln; Union County Pennsylvania A Bicentennial History by Charles M. Snyder 1976; The Union County Historical Society; The Story of a County (Union County Sesquicentennial) 1813-1963; Union County Heritage Volume VIII; The Mifflinburg Telegraph; Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania, J. H. Beers & Co., Chicago, 1898; Atlas of Union and Snyder Counties published by Pomeroy & Beers of Philadelphia in 1868; and Union County Postmasters compiled by Charles M. Steese, Staff Member of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

From the diary of the late Elder Greene Shively, born in White Springs in 1870 and a resident of Millmont from 1918 until his death in 1954:

*Sunday September 22, 1934. "Isaiah Councils Rulers" Isaiah 31:1-9. I taught my class. Wagner preached. Text - Preach the Word. This evening we had a Hymn Sing at the church. Among those taking part were the following - Mr. and Mrs. Burd, Rev. Wagner and children, Melvin Adams, John Moser, Kenneth Blyler, Elizabeth Trutt, Winifred Wert, and Billy and Donald (Shively).*

## Thank You!

I would like to thank the following people for making monetary donations toward the publication of this newsletter: Clifford and Diane Valentine of Millmont; Gregory and Nancy Ruhl of Mifflinburg; Betty Buttorff of Hartleton; Richard King of Sayville, NY; William Arney, Indianapolis, IN; and Mr. and Mrs. Anonymous.

I would like to welcome the following new subscribers: Mr. & Mrs. Jay Condit of Fresno, CA.

Thanks also to everyone who renewed their subscriptions for an additional year. Your support is what helps to make this newsletter possible, and is greatly appreciated!!

I would also like to thank Doug and Sharon (Sampsell) Denisen of Florida for donating photographs, newspapers, and numerous items of historical interest; and Sandy Winegardner of Mifflinburg for donating old newspapers, Shively family memorabilia, and old photographs.

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Internet subscriptions can be obtained FREE by visiting: [www.millmonttimes.com](http://www.millmonttimes.com)

All of the newsletters published between January 2004 to the current issue are now available on the website.

Please use the following address if you are interested in contacting the editor, subscribing to the newsletter, making a donation, sending a gift subscription, or changing your address: Tony Shively, Post Office Box 3, Millmont PA 17845, telephone: (570) 922.4297 or E-mail: [tshively@dejazzd.com](mailto:tshively@dejazzd.com)

### September Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 – Kathryn Steimling	11 – Kafy Long	23 – Donald Kahler
1 – Eunice Swain	11 – Mary Bingaman	23 – Tiffany Radel
1 - Earnest & Margaret Boney - 1971	11 – Eleanor Hoy	23 – Bernie Schmader
1 – Charles Mabus	12 – Henry Aurand	24 – Kenneth Groff
2 – Pat Libby	13 – Mallory Kerstetter Sampsell	25 – Eleanor Hackenberg
2 – Carl “Bup” & Jeanne Sampsell – 1950	15 – Emily Oberholtzer	25 – Forrest & Mary Ellen Hoffman - 1953
3 – Bridget Catherman	16 – Doug & Lisa Bowersox - 2004	25 – Richard Rothermel
3 – Martha Hoover	16 – Shayna Fultz	25 – Betty Stamm
4 – Mary Jane Brungart	16 – Bryce W. Koonsman	26 – Joanna Vanatta
4 – Joe & Kimmy Smith - 1993	17 – Mervin & Pat Kline - 1965	27 – Leroy S. Zimmerman
4 – Matthew Brubaker	18 – Morgan Kline	27 – Truman Motter
4 – Rosalie Badger	18 – Earl Frantz	28 – Eugene Hackenberg
5 – Brad & Angie Walter - 1988	20 – Doris Walter	28 – Lulu Hoffman
5 – Darlene Hackenberg	21 – Harry & Terry Mensch – 1974	29 – Ryan Osborne
5 – Marjorie Bowersox	22 – Nancy Katherman	29 – James Camp
5 – William & Connie Bastian – 1957	22 – Tiffany Fultz	30 – Brenda Ilgen
6 – Ruthann Cooper	22 - Nathan Lee Martin	30 - Sam Ely
6 – Sue Hassenplug	22 – Kyle Fultz	30 – Seth Weller
8 – Ronald Koonsman, Jr.	22 – Julie Klingman	30 – Christian Brubaker
8 – Orvie Zimmerman	23 – Wayne M. Hess	
8 – John & Betty Stamm - 1951	23 – Steve Libby	
10 – Marvin Englehart	23 – Theron W. Conrad	

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