

Fulton County Historical Society News

Fall 2001

Commonwealth Speaker to discuss Farmhouse Architecture at Fall Meeting

The fall meeting of the Fulton County Historical Society will be held Friday evening, October 19, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fulton House, McConnellsburg. This will be the Society's opening event in the annual Fulton Fall Folk Festival weekend of activities.

Professor Irwin Richman of Penn State University-Harrisburg College will speak on **The Pennsylvania German Farmhouse**. Using slides, Dr. Richman will trace local house design to its origins in Germany, and reveal why some old houses have two front doors! He will show how the Pennsylvania Germans influenced one of America's greatest political myths. Dr. Richman is the author of Pennsylvania's Architecture (revised 1997).

His presentation is a program of the PA Humanities Council, supported in part by a grant from the PA Historical and Museum Commission, and is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Special Museum Exhibit to Open

Anna Maye Sigel and Bill Hammond are preparing a new exhibit on maps, surveys and surveying equipment for Festival weekend. They've completely renovated the former library room on the second floor of the Fulton House into a display room for changing exhibits, with new track lighting. Bill, a retired art teacher, did much of the painting including an unusual ceiling treatment. Allow time before or after the fall meeting for a sneak preview, and give them a call if you can help with staffing on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, October 20 and 21.

With the basics in place, the Society may look forward to more frequent exhibits, using temporarily loaned items for special weekend displays. Offer Anna Maye and Bill your suggestions - and your help!

Come Visit our Homes

Ten houses and historic buildings in or near McConnellsburg will be open to the public for our House Tour during this year's Fall Folk Festival. Some are newly renovated but all have interesting architectural features or furnishings which your hosts will point out. Advance discount tickets are available for \$12 to members and friends through October 15. Please include a 34-cent stamp if ordering by mail, or visit Richards Variety Interiors in McConnellsburg or Elvey's Flower & Gift Shop in Knobsville to buy tickets in person. Proceeds will go toward the cost of new Historical Society library shelving, tables and chairs purchased during our move to the Fulton County Library earlier this summer. Share the enclosed brochure with a friend, or request additional copies.

This is a new Festival feature for us; if you like and support it, perhaps it can become an annual event. Special thanks to each host for opening your home to us, to the Fulton County National Bank for covering the cost of the brochure and tickets, to the House Tour planning committee, to Gene Leese for layout and Anne Gobin for most of the artwork.

Please Welcome Four New Life Members

As a birthday gift on July 25, 2001, Bill Alexander of Huntingdon gave his twin sons each a life membership in the Fulton County Historical Society. We hope B. Todd Alexander and J. Scott Alexander will become active in our Society due to their interest in local history. They moved earlier this year into their grandparents' house on North Second Street, McConnellsburg, and have a long line of Alexander ancestors in Fulton County.

Barbara James Cisney of Texas has been a member of the Historical Society for a number of years but became a life member in July 2001. She is a granddaughter of the late Vera James, long-time owner and last operator of the Fulton House when it was a hotel, boarding house and restaurant. All of us owe our appreciation to her family for repairing the Fulton House after the fire of 1944 when it might have been torn down. Her husband Leland grew up in McConnellsburg.

Clair Pittman Villano of Colorado joined the Society as a life member in August 2001 as a result of researching her Pittman family. She credits Robert D. Shives and Ron Rose with putting her in touch with new friends in her ancestor's home county. Her great-grandparents George Washington (1847-1917) and Vallora Shives (1851-1929) Pittman moved from Hancock to Washington, DC, about 1885. Clair continues to use her great-grandmother's Fulton County fruit cake recipe each Christmas.

A Special Thanks ...

Mrs. Gladys Williams has made a generous donation to the Society toward the printing cost of our latest set of four scenic postcards. The cards, from photos by her late husband Cecil Williams, were previewed in the summer newsletter.

Some Requests

- Carmen South of 11824 NE 60th St, Peabody, Kansas, 66866 writes that a "wagon train" of settlers left Warfordsburg about 1870 for Missouri and Kansas. Her grandfather was in that group, and she is finding a number of Kansas families with ancestors from Fulton County, PA. She wonders if anyone else has information on the wagon train?
- Did someone submit a photocopy of a handwritten marriage certificate signed by Rev. Joseph Powell to the library collection some years ago? The publications committee might use it as an illustration in next year's book if it can be located in one of our 500+ family history folders. The library also has various jobs for willing volunteers.
- If your mailing label shows an expiration date of 04-01-2001, please send your dues of \$15 to remain on the mailing list. We appreciate and need your support.

Upcoming Events

While we look forward to the Christmas season, we haven't yet firmed up plans for our festivities. Bill Hammond has ideas for new window decorations at the Fulton House and perhaps a special museum display. We'd like to sponsor a nostalgic evening meal in the old Fulton House dining room, with musical entertainment. Would any local church group want to prepare and carry in a home-made Christmas meal at perhaps \$8 per person, served by their youth class?

Events will be publicized in the local Fulton County News, or contact the Society in late November for exact times. Suggestions for other winter events would be welcomed.

Glenn Cordell, Administrator

An Old Fulton County Raisin Nut Fruitcake

... from Clair Pittman Villano

Line pans with brown paper, cut to overlap the sides of your pan(s) and grease the paper. Plump 1 lb. Seedless raisins and 1 lb. Seeded raisins in some hot water, pat dry and then shake in a little flour in a plastic bag. Chop 1 lb. Walnuts (or almonds) and 1/4 cup black walnuts. Chop 1 lb. Citron and orange and lemon rinds (as much or as little as you like.)

Separate 7 eggs; beat the yolks till thick. In a separate bowl, beat the whites until stiff and set bowl aside. Heat 1/2 cup molasses to which 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda has been added.

Cream 1 cup butter with 1 cup sugar (brown or white); add egg yolks and then the warm molasses mixture. Stir in 1 quart of sifted flour (4 cups), 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon cloves. Stir in a teaspoon of vanilla and 1 glass of grape jelly.

Now add the stiff egg whites and fold together. Pour into pan(s) and bake at 325 degrees till done (2-4 hours depending on size of pans.) Test with a wooden skewer. Cool, remove from pans, wrap in cheese cloth and store in tins of heavy foil wrap. Pour over spirits of your choice every week or so to "age" the cakes.

Clair's father was Joseph "Pete" Pittman, a member of the West Point class of 1933. This fruitcake sent from home was a special treat in 1946 while the family was living in Tokyo, Japan. Later in 1954 it was part of a Christmas package sent to them in Budapest, Hungary. Today Clair makes it in early November and keeps it in a cool place throughout the winter.

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