

Winter 2017

# Historical Journal



**LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

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## *Our Parlor Organs*

*Charlene Van Brookhoven*

It was common for homes in the Victorian era to have parlor organs as part of their furnishings. Queen Victoria of England reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901 thus creating the “Victorian style” of this period. Piano and organ lessons were something many young Lititz children were expected to participate in. Because many homes had an organ or piano in their parlor, it was quite accessible for students to practice on. Otherwise, would be concert pianists or organists had to find a relative or neighbor who was willing to share their instrument.

There were huge six foot high organs with shelves, mirrors and ornate carvings; medium size or cottage style organs; and small ones that also acted like a bureau or serving table when closed. Many times the organ or piano was the gathering place for families and friends. Singing popular tunes of the time or hymns favored by mother and father were enjoyed on snowy, wintry evenings and throughout the year.

An organ could be purchased for as little as \$85 from Smith American Organ Company of Boston, one of the popular organ sellers for home owners. These words appeared in their 1871 catalogue:

*“For a very low price within the means of those of quite moderate circumstances—an instrument can be procured which will be the source of musical improvement and a lasting pleasure. If all homes were made attractive, by providing innocent recreation, there would be less occasion to lament the irregular habits of the young.”*



*Our Sara Weidman Organ.*

*Story continued on page 3...*

## Recent Acquisitions

Board of Directors:  
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We thank the various members of the community for these recent donations!

1. Deeds having to do with the former property of Bingeman's Restaurant on North Broad street. Gift of Patti Meenehan.
2. A Donation of \$5,000 from the Lititz Rotary Club.
3. 36 gifts totaling \$2,600 from the 2016 Extraordinary Give.
4. A 1987 Warwick High School yearbook. Anonymously given.
5. World War 2 Ration books donated by Joanne Snavely.
6. 1800's era Spinning wheel and two candleholders. Gift of Laura Knowles Callanan.
7. "A Quiver of Arrows" book, a set of miniature Lititz houses, and dolls and clothing used in the production of Moravian dolls made by Judith Light and Betty Mearig. Gifts of Edwina Chomley-Jones.
8. Several historical books on Lititz and a copy of the Lititz Borough Police Department Annual Report from 1965. Gift of Roberta Dempster.
9. Cloth banner from the 100th Anniversary of the Peter J. Roebuck Fountain dedication; copies of early 1900s blueprints of the Lititz Train Station. Gifts of Anna Charles.

Inside this newsletter you will find your annual renewal letter for 2017. Please consider continuing your membership to the Lititz Historical Foundation.

And as it's the holiday season, why not give a gift of membership to a family member or friend? Thanks!



***Our Parlor Organs Con't:***

The Lititz Museum is the home to two organs from Lititz's past. Both donated by long-time residents of the town.

One is a Mason-Hamlin reed organ, a beautiful, ornately carved instrument once owned by The Lititz Moravian Church. Ironically, stains from Moravian lovefeast cups can be seen on the top of this organ. It was given to Roy Yerger, a long-time member of the church, for his interest in providing over 150 reed organs to the Moravian mission field.

Roy's wife Anna kindly donated this organ to The Lititz Historical Foundation in 1994 for all to appreciate. The needlepoint on the organ stool was made by Anna. Both can be seen in the Sutter Room of the museum.

The second organ donated by Sara Weidman can be seen in the revolving exhibit room in the museum.

Those who grew up in Lititz will remember Sara as an elementary teacher for many years. It's a smaller, less ornate organ used in the Sunday School of The Evangelical United Brethren Church on North Cedar Street. In the mid 1960's this church became The United Methodist Church.

Today the church is an apartment building and the Lititz United Methodist Church is located on East Market Street. The sheet music on this organ are compositions of Lititz resident Benjamin Lutz, organizer of The Lutz Family Quintet. Lutz wrote many pieces of music used to entertain folks at church functions, special occasions and many other entertainment needs in the county.

These two completely different styles of organs are among our collection of fine antiques and articles once used in homes in the growing town of Lititz.

The next time you visit our museum, please take a few moments to admire these organs—just two of the many treasures that await you at the Lititz Historical Foundation!



*Above: Mason-Hamlin Organ, donated by Anna Yerger to the LHF in 1994.*

***Winter Lecture Series 2017***

We are excited to announce the lineup for our 2017 Winter Lecture Series at the Lititz Library! Our first lecture kicks off January 14th 2017, when we welcome Gregg Scott. Gregg is a Lancaster architect, and will explore the three most dominate architectural styles of the time: Germanic, Traditional English and Georgian including Lancaster City and the surrounding countryside. Gregg, a senior partner in the architectural firm of RLPS Architects located in Lancaster County, PA, is a graduate of Penn State University with a Bachelors of Architecture degree. He holds professional affiliations with the American Institute of Architects, LeadingAge and the National Hospice Organization. In addition to practicing architecture, Gregg writes a monthly architectural design column for Lancaster Newspapers entitled “Design Intervention”.

Then in February, we will welcome David Geiger, who will be speaking about the Lancaster connection in regards to the Pennsylvania Long rifle, including the origins, mechanisms, and early history. He will also talk about important local gunsmiths from the period and characteristics of Lancaster County Rifles. Additionally, he will address the history behind the name “Kentucky Rifle”, and why this is the term is still used to describe Pennsylvania Long rifles today.

Finally, on March 18th we will welcome Gentry Stolfus who will present a lecture on the fascinating historic instrumental treasures held in the collection of the Lititz Moravian Archives. Stolfus, a Lancaster native, is a teacher and performer as well as a researcher of organology- the history, evolution, and classification of instruments. He earned his bachelor’s degree in music education from Millersville University and has since been working on various projects in the Lancaster area. For the lecture, he will delve into a small portion of the historic instrumental treasures held in the collection of the Lititz Moravian Archives.

All lectures begin at 1:30pm, and are free and open to the public. We hope to see you there!



Left to right: Gregory Scott; David Geiger; Gentry Stolfus.

## *Historical Happenings*

We had an extra special guest visitor at our museum last month!

Shown here is John Wentink of New York state who was the great-grandson of George Hepp. During the early 1900's Hepp lived in the home which is now our museum, and was a jeweler and optician in Lititz. What a thrill it was to meet John, and hear his memories visiting this home when he was a kid. He is shown here with one of the many items we have in our holdings associated with the Hepp family.

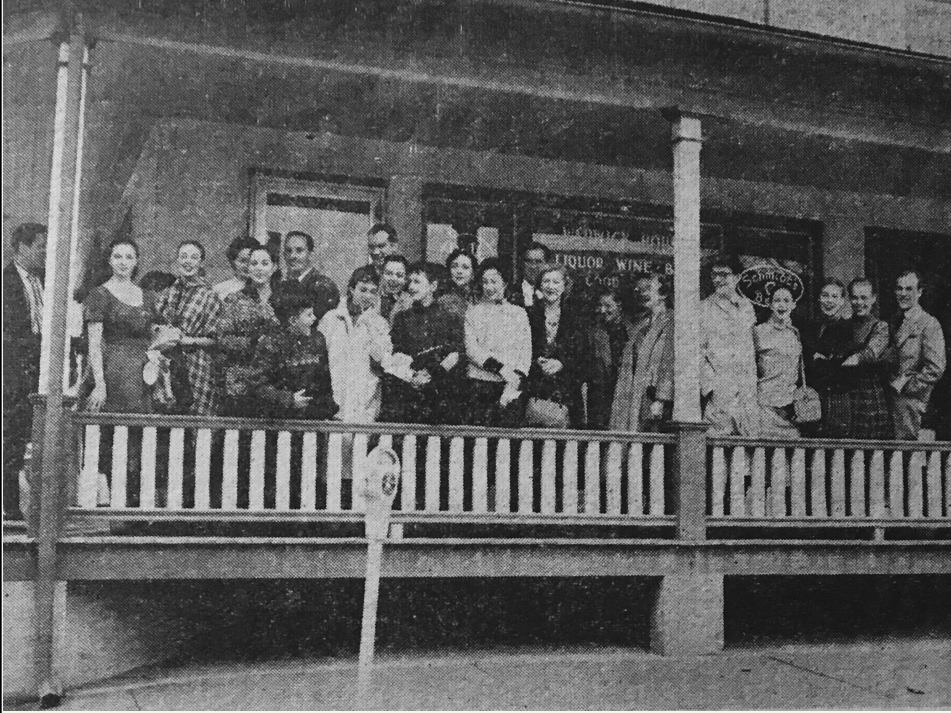
Thank you SO MUCH for visiting with us John, and for sharing these memories!



Speaking of visitors, we had a wonderful group of folks visit our museum in early December. They traveled all the way from outside of Pittsburgh to visit Lancaster County, and of course, couldn't wait to visit Lititz and our museum. We are thankful to host this motor coach trip, as well as several others from various states this past season!



## DID YOU KNOW...?



The cast of the Broadway musical "Plain and Fancy" is shown here, making a stop in Lititz to have a PA Dutch meal at the Warwick House. The show debuted in 1955, and this photo was taken about 1956, once it left Broadway. When this photo was taken, the troupe had just finished a week's run at the Hershey Theatre, and was currently performing at the Nixon Theatre in Pittsburgh.

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