

Spring 2022

Historical Journal



LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 65 145 E. Main Street, Lititz, PA 17543

717-627-4636

www.lititzhistoricalfoundation.com

Death Masks

Charlene Van Brookhoven

Small town museums often hold secrets of the past untouched and unseen through many generations of town historians. This has been the case at the Lititz Historical Foundation which includes the 1793 Christian Schropp House and the 1792 Johannes Mueller House. The Schropp House is the home of the LHF museum.

In the early 1960's word spread throughout the Lititz area that a new historical museum was in the planning stages. Residents searched their attics, garages and family heirlooms to donate to the cause.

At that time, so many pieces of furniture, ephemera and everything imaginable related to the Moravian community of Lititz was being collected. Unlike today, there were no accurate records kept of the provenance of each donated item. Therefore, there are still artifacts of Lititz history being discovered.

In 1992 the Schropp House became the second property purchased by the foundation. On the second floor of the museum, tucked in the corner of a closet in the room which now serves as the LHF library, an article of extreme rarity has been discovered. The plaster of Paris death mask of Abraham Reinke Beck, the son of 19th century Lititz Moravian educator John Beck, has become a part of the recorded collection.

A. R. Beck, founder of The Beck School for Boys, took over his father's school at the retirement of the elder Beck in 1865. Both the father John and son Abraham were very progressive educators during their teaching careers in the Moravian community. A. R. Beck built his school at 127 S. Broad Street and named the site Audubon Villa in honor of John James Audubon the famed ornithologist and naturalist.



Above: Death mask of Abraham Reinke Beck. Story continued on page 3 inside.

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We Open For The Season April 29th!

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We open for the season April 29th! Beginning that day, the Lititz Museum, Gift Shop, and tours of our 1792 Johannes Mueller House will be open for visitors.

Come visit us and learn the rich history of Lititz, Pennsylvania! You may explore our museum and gift shop or take a guided tour with one of our costumed docents!

HOURS OF OPERATIONS:

Friday and Saturday: 11am-5pm

Beginning Memorial Day: Monday through Saturday, 11am-5pm.



Annual Plant Exchange is May 1st!

The Lititz Historical Foundation in conjunction with the Lititz Garden Club will hold its Annual Plant Exchange on Sunday, May 1st at 1:30 PM. The event will be held in the Mary Oehme Gardens behind the museum buildings at 137-145 East Main Street in Lititz.

The event is rain or shine. The plants to exchange must be perennials and must have identification tags for each plant. Each plant must be placed in a container for transportation.

Upon arrival, a ticket will be handed out for each plant. The plants must be placed in categories including: Sun, Shade, Exotic, Bulbs, Herbs and Ground Cover. These tickets can be redeemed for another plant after all plants are placed in the categories and the attendees have some time to explore the categories.



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Death Masks Con't:

Audubon's philosophies played a large part in the education of both Beck Schools.

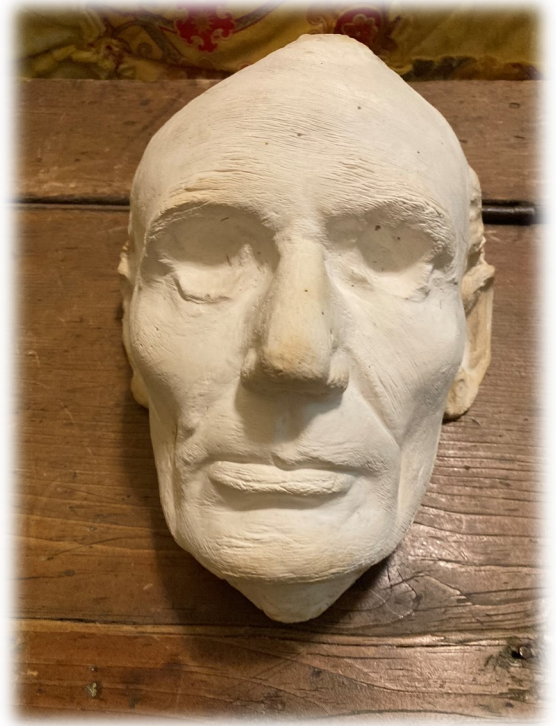
A death mask is a likeness of a person's face usually after their death and preserved for all eternity. These masks were made of either wax or light gauze to capture as much of the facial features as possible. Once this layer became dry, a mold was formed and filled with plaster of Paris. Many times intricate features not captured in the molding process had to be detailed by sculpting instruments.

King Tutankhamun's death mask, made of solid gold, is probably the best known and recognized death mask. Other well known historical figures who requested masks after their death are Mozart, Napoleon Bonaparte, Michelangelo, Martin Luther, and Benjamin Franklin.

It is interesting to note that both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln had a mask made of their face before death. These likenesses were used for future sculptures and paintings.

Death masks were not a common practice in Lancaster County or among the Moravian Church members so it is quite unusual that Beck would have made this request. It is interesting to note The Lititz Moravian Museum and Archives have in their collection the death mask of educator John Beck, father of A.R. Beck, which may have influenced the son to follow his father's desire to have his face captured in plaster for future scholars.

Above: The death mask of President Abraham Lincoln



Shown here is an early 1970s view of South Broad Street in downtown Lititz.

During the time this photo was taken, this particular block boasted a lady's fashion store, a men's clothing store, and a five and dime shop.

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Spring Into History June 4th

IT'S BACK!

Join us on June 4th for our second annual Lititz Spring Into History Festival!
FREE ENTRY!

The event is one day on Saturday, June 4th from 10am to 4pm. It's all happening at the Lititz Historical Foundation, 145 E. Main Street, Lititz, PA. Come see how early Lititz settlers lived, worked and played! Over 20 colonial artisans will be on hand.

This is a rain-or-shine event. All are welcome to join us!

Questions? Please send an email to springintohistory@gmail.com.

Hot food will be available for purchase. Delicious, regional desserts including fruit pie, whoopie pies, shoofly pie, Moravian sugar cake, coffee and mint tea will be available Plus, Artisans will offer authentic, handmade items for sale.

See you there!



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Annual Antiques Show is June 25-26

Our 59th Year! And we're back at the Warwick Middle School! Lancaster County's oldest show of its kind and always a perennial favorite, this fundraiser will be staged in the Warwick Middle School (104 Maple Street) in Lititz June 24th and 25th.

Hours are Friday 10am-5pm; and Saturday 9am-2pm
Admission is \$10.00.

Promoted as an "old time country show" a cast of nearly 50 dealers will present a wide range of interesting, reasonably priced country wares and dry goods. Shoppers can expect to find farm items, stoneware, kitchen goods, textiles, early lighting, transfer ware, doll items, coin silver, holiday items, Pennsylvania folk art, and more!

Hungry shoppers will have an opportunity onsite to purchase hot food for lunch or a snack. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year - See you there!



PA Hillbillies Car Live Appearance July 8th

Come see the PA Hillbillies car live and in person on Friday July 8th from 5-8pm! It's all happening at the Lititz Historical Foundation located at 145 East Main Street, Lititz, PA 17543. This is a free event.

Bring your camera and invite your family for some one of a kind photo ops!

This 1929 Chevy Truck was built in 1985 from original parts found in Texas. A 1930 Chevrolet engine was found in Christiana, PA and restored for the pickup truck. In 1996 the truck set out on an across country trip. The back wheels were placed in the Atlantic Ocean at Sandy Hook, NJ and 59 days later the front wheels touched the Pacific Ocean outside Hollywood, CA.

The truck has made many appearances in parades and local car shows throughout New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.

In its history, the vehicle has managed to acquire over \$40,000 in donations for the Lions Club and Veterans Groups as the Hillbilly Clan continues to travel to various locations having fun and raising money for those in need.



We look forward to seeing you at this very special event! Donations appreciated to further their mission.

DID YOU KNOW...?

This photo, which was taken circa 1917 in front of 64 North Broad Street in Lititz, shows Lititz automobile salesman John Longenecker behind the wheel of a Marion Handley automobile during a town parade. Check out the cast of unique characters on board!



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