

# Heritage Center News

Number 10, Fall '96



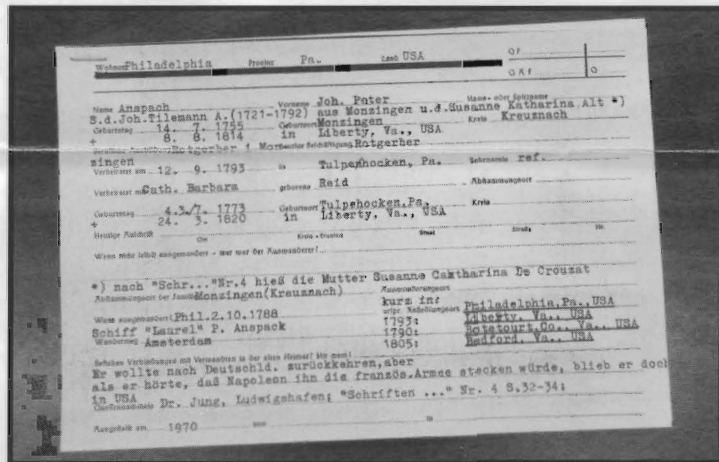
## The Heritage Center Receives Immigration Records From Germany

The Heritage Center is proud to announce it has recently received several thousand records of German immigrants who came to America from the Pfalz area in Germany and settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries. This major accomplishment for the Center would not have been possible without the help of Roland Paul, assistant director of the Immigration History Institute, Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Paul had his staff photocopy the records and personally presented them to the Center at the '96 Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival. The Center worked out a relationship with Berks County Genealogical Society in which the Society will act as the custodian of the records.

In return for taking care of the records, the Society will be able to use these informative records for the genealogical work that it normally performs. The records remain the property of the Heritage Center even though the Society is supervising their use.

With so many new records, organizing them has become a tremendous task. Dick Turnbach, director of the Society's library, is slowly accomplishing this. His first step was to roughly sort them alphabetically, and store the information in a computer.



An example of an 18th century German family immigration record now available through the Heritage Center in partnership with the Berks County Genealogical Society. The records were obtained by Heritage Center Director, David Valuska, in cooperation with the German Immigration History Institute, Kaiserslautern, Germany. Call the Society at (610) 683-9420 about possibly tracing your Pennsylvania German ancestral history.

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## First Pennsylvania German Festival A Great Success: 45,000 Attend

The Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival this past summer fulfilled its promise of providing a variety of high quality cultural programs and entertainment. The show brought together large numbers of persons from our Pennsylvania German community included among 45,000 visitors from all over the country.

There were many highlights during the multi-faceted, nine-day festival, and the feeling expressed repeatedly by numerous attendees was that this was the best presentation of our traditions in decades, perhaps the best ever. That is just what we wanted to have happen.

To make it all occur required the cooperation and hard work of many, many persons. Our thanks go to all of our Cultural Heritage Center partners: The Old Time Plowboys Club, the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Culture Society, Pennsylvania German Society, Berks County Genealogical Society, The Antique Toy and Tractor Club, and the Grossdaadi Grundsau Lodge. We are especially grateful to the advisory board of the Center for their many volunteer hours at the Center booth which was a primary stopping

point for many visitors with special interests in the culture.

A show as large as the Pennsylvania German Festival takes months to prepare, and there was hardly a pause between presenting the '96 program and getting ready for the '97 event.

As sometimes happens, enormous achievement brings with it mixed blessings. While the festival was a great success, having the largest part of the program at the familiar Kutztown Fairground site, and a smaller portion at the Heritage Center was somewhat awkward and confusing to attendees. The bottom line was that it was difficult to draw maximum attention to the fine, traditional programming at the Heritage Center.

This fact, coupled with numerous requests over the past year for the Cultural Heritage Center to continue the Heemet Fescht fall festival weekend, have led to a decision to reschedule Heemet Fescht as a separate annual event at the Heritage Center starting in September, 1997.

## Opportunity (Geleyheit)

During the nine days of the Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival this year we, at the Heritage Center, had a unique opportunity. We are given the challenge to assist the University Foundation and the Kutztown Fair Association in continuing an activity which for 50 years has created an interest in our culture. Accepting the challenge was the easy part; planning and defining the details which would be necessary took more effort. But to me, it was a perfect example of what happens when people of our culture are put to the test.

I was extremely pleased to witness the cooperative attitudes and the willingness to share the work, and to put in the time necessary to reach the goals. The comments made to me regarding the efforts at the festival were most heartening. They were indeed appreciated.

On July 19, it was my pleasure to visit the new home of Pat and Jerry Gearhart in State College to receive the donation of a rope bed which has been in their family for 140 years. This resulted from a Pennsylvania German program at Moravian Square in Nazareth where I had mentioned that the Heritage Center was seeking old period furniture to furnish rooms in the stone farm house.

Newspaper releases have been sent to announce the eight dialect classes scheduled to start soon. These classes are sponsored by the Grossdaadi Grundsau Lodge, which provides a fraktur diploma to those students who successfully complete the 15-week course. One of the class locations is Kutztown University. If you missed the notification in the newspaper, please do not hesitate to call the Heritage Center at (610) 683-1330 to register, or for more information.

Yes, we continue to recognize the opportunities and, as our forefathers said, *Mir gewwe em Herr Gott unser dank fer died Geleyheit aus uns gewwe iss.*

Paul F. Kunkel  
President  
Heritage Center Advisory Board

## HIRAM AMANDUS FRANTZ: Story of a Pennsylvania Preacher/Inventor

by David C. Semmel

In the summer of 1976, I saw a huge one-cylinder engine in operation at the Blue Mountain Gas & Steam Engine Meet at Jacktown, PA. I learned that it was a Dieter engine rated at 15 HP and the present owner used it to power a silo-filling blower. I was astonished at this use, but the owner assured me it was a very reliable and powerful engine, weighing at least three tons. Evidently, several other Dieter engines are still in existence.

I found that the Dieter engine was made by the Dieter Foundry in Cherryville, PA. A former neighbor of mine, Mr. Leslie Remaley, had worked at the Dieter Foundry between 1930 and 1940. He referred to the engine as a Frantz engine, saying that the credit for its design should be given to a Reverend Frantz. He told me the engines had no longer been in production when he worked there, because a fire had destroyed the patterns and demand for the one-cylinder engines had dropped. Mr. Remaley referred me to Hiram Frantz, who knows much about the early years of automobiles and one-cylinder engines. Mr. Frantz is the name sake of his uncle, Rev. Hiram Amandus Frantz.

The Reverend Frantz was born in 1864, near Schiedy, PA. The first known evidence of his mechanical ability was a modification of a treadle powered sewing machine. Between 1895 and 1900 his wife was injured and lost some function of her feet. He designed and built a wind-up mechanism for her sewing machine so that she used her feet only to operate a brake pedal. The sewing machine is still in the possession of Mr. Frantz. It was patented and marketed by Rev. Frantz.

In 1900, Rev. Frantz became the pastor of churches at Cherryville and Kreidersville, PA. He developed a close friendship with the Dieter Foundry's owners, and they gave Rev. Frantz an outlet for his mechanical ability. With Frantz designing and the Deiters producing, the one-cylinder gasoline and kerosene engines became a reality.

Between 1900 and 1905 there is evidence that he designed and built one or more automobiles. Whether he did this himself or with the help of the Dieter Foundry is not known.

Tilghman Frantz, Hiram Frantz's father, chided his brother, Rev. Frantz, for hitching only one horse (one cylinder) to his car when two or four horses (cylinders) would do a better job and wouldn't have to work so hard!

Shortly after his experiment with a gas car, Rev. Frantz was involved with the design of a steam car in Reading, PA. There is no record of what make it was or whether it was successful, but Rev. Frantz reportedly drove his steam car to and from Reading. The burner on the steam car was apparently very efficient, the design being not unlike the arrangement of the magnets on a Model T Ford fly wheel. He also designed a gas engine that did not have a crankshaft as we know it but rather a figure eight groove cut in a shaft, in which groove a pin was moved by the piston, causing the shaft to revolve.

Shortly before World War I, Rev. Frantz designed a 4-wheel drive mechanism but lacking financial backing sold it for \$800. His wife thought the offer was too low, but he said since very few people would be interested in this invention, he would accept it. Who bought the design is not known, but surely many army vehicles were built thereafter based on Rev. Frantz's idea.

## The Heritage Center Continues to Grow

The Heritage Center thanks everyone who aided it in continuing to preserve the Pennsylvania German culture through funding renovations and donating artifacts. Without this devoted support, the Center would not be as spectacular as it presently is.

Anyone who has visited the Heritage Center's farm site will agree that the true feeling of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture comes from the many artifacts which decorate it. This is why it is essential for the Heritage Center to acquire such items of history. Without these items, the visitors would not be able to step back into a different time period and a different way of life.

Within the last year several individuals and groups have given valuable gifts to the Center in support of its mission.

Sterling and Florence Zimmerman and their daughter, Gloria, have donated a wonderful green hauling wagon with a rig that enables two horses to pull it. Numerous friends of the Center donated collectible books and artifacts including such unique items as a complete doctor's kit from the Civil War.

**(Continued on Page 4)**

# Join the Exciting Third Annual German Heritage Tour!



"I thought it was wonderful. I enjoyed it very much. I really liked mixing with the German people, talking to them and spending time with them and not just sightseeing. It was also fun to get to know the other people on the trip," said Sara Mack about her experience last year on the second annual German Heritage tour.

This year the Heritage Center will have its third annual German Heritage Tour from May 27 to June 6, 1997, and it will be personally escorted by Dr. David Valuska, Director of the Heritage Center. The travelers will visit the Pfalz region and other areas where immigrants who were the first Pennsylvania Germans left to come to America.

The trip will mainly focus on the areas of Germany which had been home

to the immigrants who came to Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries. Part of the tour will be conducted by Roland Paul, assistant director of the Immigration History Institute, Kaiserslautern, Germany. He is an expert on the history and genealogy of immigrant families and has held a key role in arranging for the transfer of thousands of 18th and 19th century immigration records to the Heritage Center.

If you have an interest in your German ancestry and the land on which your forebears lived, then don't miss this trip! It could be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Without a doubt, you would come back with great comments similar to Sara Mack's.

The 10-day, 9-night trip will cross the lands of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France. The trip cost includes airfare, rooms at three and four star traditional hotels, two meals daily, and admission to selected museums and entertainment.

The itinerary will include:

A day in Boppard where a tour of the town and the Roman ruins will be given, followed by a cruise on the Rhein River past the famous Lorelei. In the evening the visitors can enjoy a free wine tasting tour in the lovely town of St. Goar.

Two days in Kaiserslautern, the center of the immigration region, with tours of the town and countryside. In the first evening the group will have a typical regional meal and will be treated with music and dance, and in the second evening they will dine with the Burgermeister and other officials of the town of Enkenbach-Alsenborn.

A day visiting historically significant areas in France with a tour of Alsace-Lorraine. Later they will visit the cathedral city of Strausborg and then travel to a quaint inn in the vicinity of Colburg.

Several days will be spent touring Innsbruck, Salzburg, Austria, Illerbeuren, and Munich, Germany, where the group will enjoy museums, castles, and beautiful scenery.

The expected cost of the trip is \$1975 (with a \$300 deposit). For more information, or to make reservations, please contact:

Alphorn Tours, Inc.  
5788 Route 202  
P.O. Box 359  
Lahaska, PA 18931 — USA

TELEPHONE: (215) 794-5653  
FAX: (215) 794-7199



Scenes from the second German Heritage Tour: the town square at Rothenburg, and the cathedral at Speyer.

## German Records

(Continued from Page 1)

Instead of just copying the information from the records into a computer file, though, Dick is actually graphically scanning each document into the computer so the entire image of the document will be saved. This will give the records a long life span and reduce the chance of someone accidentally losing one of the record sheets.

Once all the documents are saved in a computer file, an index will be made for quick access to any desired record. The records also need to be matched with the existing American records. After this process is completely finished, it will be possible for many people who are Pennsylvania Dutch to trace their heritage back to Germany and to many of their distant relatives. A person will also be able to find if he has any German heritage from the Pfalz area by having the computer cross-reference his name against the names the computer holds.

These records are a treasure for those interested in genealogy; therefore, it's not hard to believe that many people and groups involved in genealogical work are asking the Society for a copy of these files. The Society believes, however, that it wouldn't be right to just give all this information away after the vast amounts of work that will have been done to organize the information.

Unfortunately these records are only available to members of the Genealogical Society or of the Heritage Center, but anyone can become a member of either the Society or the Center. A membership with the Society only costs \$20 a year with full access to their library. A copy of any of the records will cost \$1 for Society members or \$2 for Heritage Center members.

This recent acquisition eliminates the need for people to travel to Germany to trace their heritage; they now only need to come to Kutztown.

Genealogical Society of Berks County (610) 683-9420

# From the Director

## Center Continues To Grow

(Continued from Page 2)

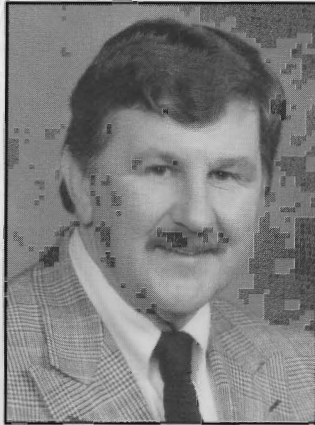


Photo by Jeff Unger

**Dr. David Valuska**

Dear Friends:

Time goes by so quickly that it is hard to believe that in just a few short months we have produced our first Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival and guided our second Heritage Tour back to Germany. This and much more has been happening at the Cultural Heritage Center!

Now, we are busy planning for a very active coming year. Please mark your calendars for Glieder

Fescht, our annual dinner meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 20; for the third German Heritage Tour, May 27 to June 6; and for the second annual Kutztown Pennsylvania German Festival, June 28 - July 6. And, yes, in response to many, many requests, Heemet Fescht returns next fall! More details on all of these events in subsequent issues of the newsletter. And more activities planned for you at the Center, as will be revealed later.

Our hat goes off to the Brieder and Schweschdere (brothers and sisters) of the Grundsau Lodges and Fersommlings. The Haaptmann of Grundsau Lodge #1 and Da Grossdaadi Lodge, Carl Snyder, and our special consultant, Sterling Zimmerman, aided us immeasurably in receiving funds from these worthy organizations.

Construction and renovation at the Center continues at a steady pace. The barn has a new infra-structure, the outside walls were painted and the hex signs refreshed. The comfort facilities and office space are near completion and are nearly ready for use. Our advisory board, and particularly President Paul Kunkel and board member Harvey George, have given their time and skill in these farm site projects, and we are most grateful.

Mach's gut!

**David L. Valuska, Director  
Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center**



**Sterling and Florence Zimmerman graciously presented this distinctive wagon and rig to the Heritage Center.**

Other artifacts the Center received include a 4-poster cannonball bed, a loom, and a blue, red, and green bed coverlet woven in 1840.

But the cultural feeling would be incomplete if the artifacts weren't in an authentic setting, which calls for house renovations.

Ruth Freyberger, Roy Meck, Helen Kisthardt, and Alice and Gladys Lutz are individually committed to renovating various rooms in the stone farmhouse. With the funding provided by Florence Bayer, the Center also has completely renovated the wash-house.

The University put a new roof (which was desperately needed) on the barn last year, installed electrical and sewer lines, and constructed a restroom complex for the visitors to the farm site.

Also, the Grossdaadi Grundsau Lodge is funding renovations for the upstairs bedrooms in the farmhouse which they will be able to use for themselves.

If anyone has any historical artifacts or funds they would wish to donate to the Heritage Center to further its mission, please get in contact with the Center. Otherwise, be sure to visit the Heritage Center to get a taste of the simple, but practical Pennsylvania Dutch lifestyle.

Heritage Center News  
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