

The King of Prussia Gazette

Preserving Upper Merion's Past to Enliven its Future

Volume V, Number One

Spring 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A New Year Filled With Rewards and Challenges

When our Board Chairman Frank Luther gently nudges me for another President's Letter, I often have to scramble for content. Lately however, there has been plenty to write about.

I am pleased to announce that we recently received a gift of \$1000 from the estate of Ed Dybicz, and we are eternally grateful for his generosity. This gift was in memory of Edward J. Dybicz and his sister Marie Dybicz Lewandowski. Ed was a good friend of the Society, and the fact that we had his blessing and support speaks volumes about the work we are doing. I like to think we are keeping his memory alive by carrying on his great legacy for future generations.

At our January business meeting held at the Historic King of Prussia Inn, we entertained a full house with a brief history of the Inn and spirited conversation after. One of our guests (and new member) introduced himself to me after the program as Chris Kaasmann. Chris has lived in the area for some time and enjoys our rich local history. He is a big fan of geocaching, which if you don't already know is an outdoor recreational activity, in which participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", anywhere in the world. We are currently working with Chris to develop these caches here in Upper Merion, to help expose the community to what is left of our historic past. Another development from that meeting led to saving the historic marker on the Trout Creek bridge, and you can read about that elsewhere in this issue. We are so proud of our membership, and salute their dedication.

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Recently the NorView Farms "Big Chicken" was sold on eBay. The iconic rooster stood watch over the farm since the late 1960's, but was deemed recently unsound. It was purchased by local entrepreneur Francis "Shorty" Schultz, Jr., so it could be kept in the township. We extend our grateful praise for a job well done and for such dedication to the community we all love.

An early goal of the King of Prussia Historical Society, dating back to the 1950s, was to create a local museum for our community. Finding the right place to meet, store and curate our collection, and to display it to the public still remains a challenge. While Christ Old Swedes Church is our current location, it currently does not meet all our needs. We welcome your ideas and comments.

The Town Crier—

updates from the Society...

**OUR 2016 CHARTER MEMBERS**

We acknowledge our Charter Members for 2016 and thank them for their support: Emma Carson, Dave and Marianne Furman, John and Shirley Funkhouser, Michael Morrison, Frank Luther.

The Society is also pleased to honor Ed Dybicz (1923-2015) as an honorary member for his many contributions to the Society and for his untiring efforts to preserve the history of Upper Merion.

INTERESTED IN WRITING?

The Society welcomes articles prepared by its members. Contact Frank Luther if you might be interested in writing and sharing an article for our publication.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Check the back page for the listing of our upcoming meeting dates and our special programs.

INFO ABOUT UPPER MERION

Is there a question you have about some aspect of the township's history? You can submit your question to us at info@kophistory.org and we will provide an answer in a future issue. Please check the letter from the New Jersey teacher that appears in this issue.

Check out the King of Prussia Historical Society website at www.kophistory.org. And find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kophistory.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership campaign for 2016 is underway! New memberships and renewals will be accepted at this time. Looking for a unique gift? Why not present a family member or friend with an annual membership for the King of Prussia Historical Society! We supply a gift card for you to present to the recipient.

Student/Senior (65+): \$35.00	Individual: \$40.00
Family Household \$50.00	Patron: \$125.00
Charter: \$250.00	

OUR MAILING ADDRESS

Please note that our mailing address is King of Prussia Historical Society, PO Box 60716, King of Prussia, PA 19406-0716.



(Photo courtesy of David Montalvo)

STONE BRIDGE MARKER

On January 9, 2016, at our annual business meeting, the subject of the accident and damage to the marker stone from the Trout Creek Bridge on West Valley Forge Road was brought up. Concerned members were worried that the marker stone was damaged in the accident, as it no longer appeared to be intact.

Following the meeting, board members Russell Rubert and David Montalvo both visited the scene and were able to locate the marble marker. David moved it to a safe location next to a tree by the stream, and both he and Russell left, knowing that no damage appeared to have befallen the marker.

In February, Russell Rubert again visited the site and noticed that the marker was no longer in the spot where he and David Montalvo had left it. Both David and Russell began a series of inquiries to the township, local newspapers, and the state, to see if anyone had the marker in their possession. He soon learned that neither the state nor the township had taken possession of the marker, and set out to find it. On February 10, he discovered that the marker had slipped from its resting place and slid down the bank, coming to rest by the edge of Trout Creek. Russell then took possession of the stone, and removed it. His thinking was that the historical society would keep it safely in their possession until such time as the bridge was repaired and it could be reinstalled, all with the blessing of one of the township supervisors. He also contacted PA Department of Transportation, to let them know that the stone was safely in his possession.

On February 19, Russell Rubert was contacted by Steve Bartkovich, E.I.T. (Bridge Inspection, PA Department of Transportation / Engineering District 6-0 / Bridge Unit / 7000 Geerdes Boulevard / King of Prussia, PA 19406), thanking him for "your interest in the historic bridge and the lengths you took to preserve this irreplaceable plaque for us." He also went on to say that PennDOT would like the plaque back in their possession so that when they rebuild the bridge it could be reinstalled.

(Continued on page 8.)

A commitment to Preservation

THE DIARY

(A glimpse of life in Upper Merion in the early half of the nineteenth century.) , Part 2 continued from the Winter 2015 edition. Please note that spellings are shown as Isaac had written them.

January, 1846

Thursday 1: New Year comes in clear and pleasant. Squire Bisbing called here for the first this year.... I went down to Wentz's store. Spent an hour at Mr. Potts. I hauled a load of corn for Capt. Shainline.... Great dancing ball held in Norristown tonight.

Friday 2nd: Rained very hard through the night. Continues on raining this morning until 10 o'clock... Waters in our meadow very high... I called to see Mr. Henderson this evening. He is on the mend very fast

Saturday 3: I took a ride on horseback up over the gulf hills this afternoon. Elizabeth Amies came up from town to spend some time here. William came home to day after having been away for more than two weeks. I am glad to see him back again.... The snow has all gone except for a few spots. The frost has nearly all left the ground. The roads are in bad order for traveling....

Sunday 4: ...We all went to the Swedes Church this morning to hear Mr. Lightner.... Roads are very muddy.... Jonathan Roberts' of the valley and Squire Bisbing spent this afternoon [here]. ...The Squire and I went over to Norristown to hear a lecture at the Presbyterian church delivered by Mr. Gould on Geography. We called for Libby Brower and Becky Shainline who went with us over there.

Monday 5: ...I took sisters Elizabeth and Louisa over to Norristown this afternoon.... Went to the Magnetic telegraph office which is now in operation conveying news between Norristown and Philada.... there and back in much less than a minute. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes called here.... The line of the Magnetic telegraph is rapidly progressing and nearly completed between Philadelphia and New York, and also to extend to Baltimore.

Tuesday 6: ...George Shainline and I went up over the Gulf Mills this afternoon for evergreen. Henry C. Potts called here. George Shainline, Sister Ann, and Mr. Lightner took tea here....

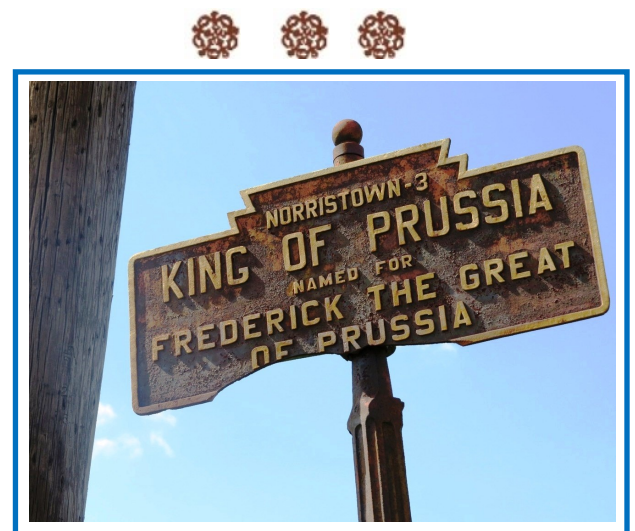
Wednesday 7: Had a very heavy rain during the last

night, of which the creek which flows through our meadow overflowed....

Thursday 8: ...This day being the 8 of January is the day which has been fixed on some time past for marriage of my sister Louisa to Mr. Geo. W. DeWeese, and they were according married at 7 o'clock this evening at this house by Rev. Mr. Lightner. The wedding was well attended by numerous friends, of whom many staid all night. The most fun of all was with the Calithumpian band. They came here to play. Our company surrounded and took their instruments from them.

Friday 9: ...Mr. Bull, Mr. Hartshorne, Miss Sarah Roberts, Mrs. Sophia DeHaven, Ellis C. Evans, Elizabeth Shainline, Benj. Bartholomew, and others spent part of the morning here.

We also learn from Isaac's diary that Upper Merion had a turnpike as far back as 1853. Finished in 1853, a three mile turnpike extended from Bridgeport to King of Prussia. Details about this early turnpike in Upper Merion were recorded in the diaries kept by Isaac W. Holstein during the 1840's and 1850's. Isaac lived in Peach Park---the area was near the present Henderson Road and Church Road intersection. Shares for the turnpike sold for ten dollars. He listed the rates charged: hogs and sheep, four cents; a score of cattle, eight cents; a horse and rider, three cents; four-wheeled chariots, coaches, phaetons, or dearborns...nine cents; four horses, twelve and a half cents; and sleighs, three cents for each horse. If a tool gate keeper was caught demanding more than the rate, he had to pay a fine of five dollars to the Upper Merion Supervisors.





TEACHER E-MAIL

On September 24, 2015, Brian Levinson wrote to the King of Prussia Historical Society: Hello, I teach high school World History in West Windsor, NJ. During a lesson on Frederick the Great of Prussia, my students were interested in learning more about how King of Prussia, PA took its name. My assumption was that it had to do with Prussians settling there during the Revolutionary War, but I did some online research and found a variety of possible answers. So I figured I would get in touch with your organization for a more definitive answer. Any info would be much appreciated. (I've also been updating a teacher blog <http://levinsonhistory.weebly.com/> for the class and if there was any way I might be able to post your response online, please let me know. Thanks for your consideration, Brian Levinson

In a response from Society President, Michael Morrison, he wrote:

Mr. Levinson,
Sadly, it's not a simple answer. While some tend to like the "follow the money" trail, others like Affleck tend to follow the history trail. You may post the answer and edit it as you see fit.
Best,
Michael

King of Prussia was originally known as Reesville (Welsh spelling), named for the prominent family who owned most of the land in the area.

The U.S. Postal Service tells us it was officially established as Reesville on January 18, 1820. The name was changed to Upper Merion on February 28, 1829, and to King of Prussia on April 5, 1837.

The official name of the municipality is Upper Merion Township, established in 1713, and incorporated in 1789. The fire department uses King of Prussia, while the police department uses Upper Merion,

Over time, the geographical boundaries of King of Prussia then, have grown to be those of Upper Merion Township. Those boundaries include Valley Forge National Historical

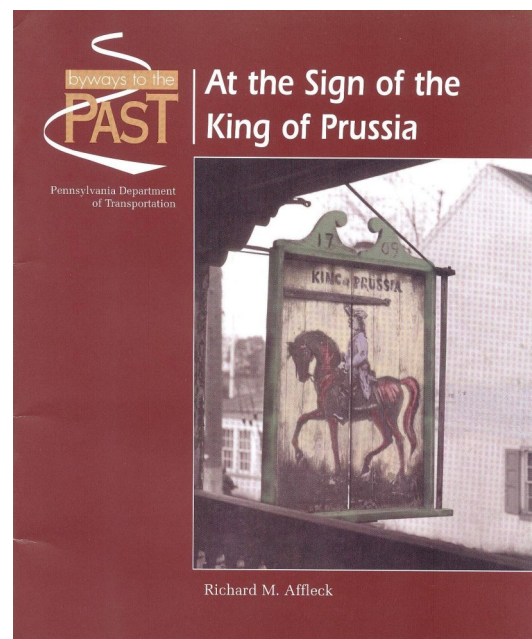
What's in a name? One theory suggests that King of Prussia derived its name from the Pre-Revolutionary Inn that once stood proudly in the middle of the town. Many theories abound as to how the inn got its name. The most popular theory is that the inn was named in honor of King Frederick the Great of Prussia, for his support of the colonies during the American Revolution.

What's in a name? Another suggests that a sign was hung outside the Inn to attract the wealthy Prussians who assisted Washington and his brave men at Valley Forge. Franklin had already met Von Steuben in Paris and convinced him to help out with the revolution.

What's in a name? A third theory tells of a surveyor who passed through town while mapping the area, and saw the sign on the Inn and thought it must be the name of the town, recording it on his map.

What's in a name? There is also a story that the proprietor of the Inn needed a sign painted, and employed a German painter to do the work. After the painting of a man on horseback was finished, the German painter labeled it "King of Prussia".

What's in a name? Finally, in Richard Affleck's work, *At the Sign of the King, Byways to the Past*, published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for PennDOT in 2002, he describes the area now known as Greater King of Prussia as being referred to as the Sign of Charles Frederick Augustus, King of Prussia, recognizing Frederick the Great who assisted the British in defeating the French during the French and Indian War.



Richard M. Affleck



(Photo courtesy of King of Prussia Historical Society.)

DR. HENRY DE WITT PAWLING

*(This article is based on material from **Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of Montgomery County, 1895**, edited by Samuel T. Wiley.)*

Longtime residents of King of Prussia will remember this building. In the 1920s, the building was transformed into the "Peacock Gardens", a restaurant famous for its live peacocks. Notables such as Cab Calloway used to play music here. By 1963, it was renamed the "Peacock Inn". The current-day Tilted Kilt used to be Dr. Pawling's practice. This building is one of the oldest in Upper Merion still in use. Built before 1747 by Henry Griffith, this little inn serviced traffic from the Gulph and Swedesford Roads. In 1857, Dr. Henry De Witt Pawling established a medical practice in that building; Dr. Henry DeWitt Pauling, one of its many owners, was a prominent physician who came to Upper Merion Township in 1835. He was well known till his death in 1893. Today the building sits at the very edge of 202 South just before the on ramp to the PA Turnpike at 826 W. DeKalb Pike and is currently the Tilted Kilt.

The Pawlings were descendants of Henry Pawling who, with his son and grandson Henry, are thus described in an old document: "Henry Pawling came from Maine to New York in 1684, was sheriff there, married Nattee Roosa, daughter of Albert Heyman Roosa, of New York State. His son, Henry Pawling, born 1689, married Jacomyte Hegt, who was the daughter of Cornelius Barnes Hegt, born in South Holland. This Henry Pawling and his brother John came to Upper Providence in 1720, Henry taking up land on the south side of the Perkiomen, John on the north. Henry's remains are buried at Evansburg. The son of this Henry and Jacomyte Hegt was also called Henry, who was born in 1714 and died 1792. He and his wife Eleanor died some time apart and their remains lie in Evansburg graveyard. Their son, Henry Pawling, who was born in 1746, and married Rebecca Bull, and was the Henry Pawling who was appointed associated judge by Henry Ross on January 20, 1789, and was the Henry Pawling, Jr., who, as one of the commissioners, located and purchased ground for the present courthouse and jail. Judge Pawling had three sons and

a daughter. William married Rebecca Butler and had three sons: Henry, Albert, Thomas, now dead. Henry died unmarried; Hon Levi, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch, and Eleanor, who married the Rev. Dr. James Milnor, rector of St. George's Episcopal church, New York city."

Dr. Henry DeWitt Pawling was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, served as assistant surgeon on the United States frigate Polomac in a three years cruise around the world, and in 1836 located at King of Prussia, where he had an extensive practice over parts of three counties. A pamphlet, "History for the Strafford School Centennial" notes, "The nearest doctor, Dr. Pawling, lived in King of Prussia. He had made a one-seated buggy just big enough to hold himself, so he would not have to stop on his rounds and lift in passengers."

He was a Democrat and an Episcopalian, and was a very prominent and active man. In 1837, Dr. Pawling married Anna Bull, who was a daughter of Levi Bull, of Chester County, and died July 4, 1862, age forty-five years. Their children were Nathan, Eva and Levi, who all died in infancy.

George W. Pawling, the fourth child, ex-recorder of deeds and an active and popular Democrat of Montgomery County, was the son of Dr. H. D. W. and Anna (Bull) Pawling, and was born at King of Prussia, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, January 21, 1848. He was reared at King of Prussia, where he received a good English education, and after leaving school engaged in the drug business with Dr. William Wetherill, of Philadelphia. He remained in the drug business until 1869, when he returned home and assisted his father until the death of the latter in 1893. In the meantime, he had taken considerable interest in political affairs, and in 1890 the Democrats made him their nominee for recorder of deeds of Montgomery County, to which office he was elected at the succeeding election. He served as recorder from 1891 to 1894, and was interested in the stone business with Frank Patterson at Valley Forge, where the first tracts on which they opened quarries were merged into the Valley Forge National park, laid out in 1895.

Mr. Pawling was an active Democrat in political affairs, and while prominent in the county council of his party, always paid close attention to the township organization. He served for nine years as a member of the school board at King of Prussia, and was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Of an honored and respected family, George W. Pawling was active and useful alike in village, township and county affairs.



GEOCACHING

by Chris Kaasman

I have always been interested in local history wherever I have lived and am fascinated with the history in Upper Merion and its surroundings. I have read all 3 books you've written on the subject and hope to become more involved with the KOP Historical Society.

I have some ideas and a project I'm hoping the Society can help me with.

The first is regarding a hobby of mine called, Geocaching. If you are not familiar, geocaching is the anytime, anywhere game where players use GPS coordinates to locate containers, or caches all over the world. The caches are intended to bring people to significant or important locations. It is my goal to hide various caches around Upper Merion Township which will bring and educate people on our local history. Since September 2015 I've deployed caches at the Moore-Irwin House, the Rooster at Norview Farm and the Trinity Lane bridge (which by my research tells me that it is the 5th oldest active bridge in the country). Since I've deployed these caches, a total of 45 unique visitors have gone to these locations and have learned a little bit about the history associated with them. I think this is great and I'd like your help to do more.

So here's my next idea: I'd like to deploy what's called a multi-cache to tell the story of the King of Prussia Inn and its move to the new location. The idea is to hide a cache near the old location on Route 202 which will contain coordinates to the new location. Finders will go to the new location, input the new coordinates and then go to the new location. In order to do this, I would like to ask permission from the historical society and/or the chamber of commerce to hide a cache somewhere on the premises of the Inn. I was thinking of attaching something to the fence. Can you help me with this?

Moving on from this, I really like the idea of developing a brochure which will be handed out to the schools and would offer my assistance in doing so. Along those same lines, I'd

like to offer the following ideas on how to continue to educate Upper Merion residents and visitors.

Put historical facts on the newly installed LED sign at the twp. building. These facts can be short and sweet like the e-history facts in the newsletter.

Put together a kind of scavenger hunt where people go to various historical locations throughout the township to gain clues or game pieces which can lead them to an eventual prize. We could do this through geocaching or otherwise. We could involve the Valley Forge Tourism group and various businesses throughout the township that could make and offer support.

Put educational signage and pictures on plaques around town where visitors can go and learn about significant areas. This would obviously take money, but could be something to be pursued through the Board of Community Assistance.



A REAL FIND

by John Crockett

My family came to live on Gulph road in 1955. Our house was just past the original UMHS. I graduated from the new UM in 1964.

My second life.... began in 1986 in East Norriton. I lived in a neat secluded apartment that included a few other rentals; we called the collection, the Compound. My neighbor Kathy Travis and I became good friends. My last name is Crockett, hers was Travis. Does the name Alamo come to mind along with the Compound?

On a Saturday morning, Kathy presented me with an old liquor license dated 1915, in the name of Alexander Crockett, which she found at a Yard Sale.

A REAL FIND, cont.

Three homes later it found itself hanging on the wall in my wine cellar, it was MY license to make wine! I often wondered if it was from the K of P Inn? I knew the Peacock Inn was also operational at that time.

I posted a picture of it on the Facebook site, "King of Prussia is more than a Mall". I thought there would be knowledgeable people on the site that might comment on it. Well, it took all of two minutes for Michael Morrison to respond. He told me it was from the K of P Inn.

I donated the license to the Historical Society, Michael had a framed copy of it made for me to keep.

Now, as Sid Harvey use to say, for the rest of the story....

When I moved next door to Kathy Travis, I was recently divorced and without a job. Kathy had a cleaning business and would have me give her a hand time to time.

One of her clients was Michaels Grandmother who lived on King of Prussia Road. She also cleaned for Michael's parents. His father had a specialty construction business and hired me as a helper on a job.

One could only imagine Michael's surprise when I told him Kathy was the source of the document. Kathy has since passed, but now, almost 30 years later the license is where it should be.



TRASH OR TREASURE?

Are you saving a local treasure, one that might be disposed of when doing the spring cleaning or being disposed of when moving or downsizing? Consider contacting the King of Prussia Historical Society to see if your item would be a useful addition to our collection.

Last year, with the unfortunate passing of Ed Dybicz, the Society became the owners of his collection. Prior to his death, he directed his family to give his materials to the Society. An important Upper Merion collection was saved.

Join us on May 14, at twelve noon, for our annual May meeting, **Out of the Archives**, which will feature some of the items that were found in Ed's collection. In addition, we will host our annual Society Picnic and a Book Sale.

You will also learn more about the Edward J. Dybicz Memorial Scholarship Award which will be presented annually by the King of Prussia Historical Society to honor Edward Dybicz for his accomplishments in preserving the local history of Upper Merion through his research and writings.



STONE BRIDGE MARKER, cont. from page 2.

On February 23, 2016 a PennDOT representative met Russell Rubert at his place of business to receive the plaque. It is now in the hands of PennDOT. Russell Rubert commented that he hoped the plaque would indeed be reinstalled on the historic bridge in a timely manner, and not end up in a warehouse somewhere next to the Ark of the Covenant!

The King of Prussia Historical Society would like to thank both Russell Rubert and David Montalvo for their efforts in saving an irreplaceable piece of history. We commend your dedication to local history and thank you for your hard work.



(Photo courtesy of Russell Rubert.)

2016 Program Calendar

Subject to change; check the society's website or Facebook page for the most up to date information:
www.kophistory.org ~ www.facebook.com/kophistory or contact info@kophistory.org

March 12 ~ 2:00 pm: Jim Brazel: Reading Railroad's Chester Valley Line

April 2 ~ 10:00 pm: Board Meeting

April 9 ~ 2:00 pm: Michael Tolle: They've Been Down So Long.../Getting Up's Still on Their Minds

May 14 ~ 10:00 pm: From the Archives: The Ed Dybic Collection; Society Picnic and Book Sale

June 11 ~ 10:00 pm: Field Trip: Roberts School

No meetings in July or August

Unless noted otherwise, meetings are held on Saturday at Christ Church (Old Swedes) Hall,

740 River Road, Swedesburg PA 19405 * * * GPS coordinates [40.103498, -75.327288](https://www.google.com/maps/place/40.103498,-75.327288)

est. 1953

KING OF PRUSSIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO BOX 60716
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A Commitment to Preservation!