



# Hellertown Historical Society

Dedicated to Preserving the History and Heritage of Hellertown and its People

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## Upcoming 2016 Events

Holiday Open House – December 2

Doors Open 6:30PM

Annual Toy Train Display – Sundays

December 4-18, 1PM-4PM

Santa's Visit/Holiday Shopping at the Mill –

December 11 Noon-4PM

*Feedback is essential for any publication to improve and grow. We welcome readers to provide their opinions, suggestions and comments about the content featured in our newsletter. Please send your feedback to the Editor at the email address below.*

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## HHS Herb Garden Dedicated By Hellertown Woman's Club

*By Don Mills*

Remember the musical lyrics...."parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme"? That was from the song "Scarborough Fair" by the folk-rock duo Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel. Released in 1966, the song was one of many the duo performed for the hit film "The Graduate". That's about the extent where the similarity ends for this article, other than to say it is a lovely song as is the lovely Heller-Wagner Grist Mill Herb Garden.

The Heller-Wagner Grist Mill herb garden was a vision that the Hellertown Woman's Club decided to take on as a project 25 years ago to help beautify the ongoing restoration to the Mill. The purpose was to establish the herb garden as it would have appeared during the colonial-era period with common herbs needed for cooking, medicines and other household uses during the period.

Based on a recent article published by the Hellertown Woman's Club, member Helen Ballek, who was knowledgeable about gardening of this type, was the person who stepped up to chair this project. She set out to design a plan for the new garden. Other members joined in the effort. The location would be near the North Wall of the existing Grist Mill. With the rhythmic fall of water in the nearby mill race, the garden began to take shape.

Helen devoted endless hours and effort over the years to the garden since its creation. From time to time, she brought herb teas, taste treats and flowers from the garden to the Woman's Club meetings. As often happens with Community Groups, other projects take precedent, a lack of volunteers and health of current members caused the garden to slip into poor condition. Even as her own health declined, Helen did what she could to maintain the garden she so loved.

Sadly, Helen passed away in 2014 and many thought it would spell the end to the herb garden. That same year though, Sharon Clark joined as a new member in the Community group. Sharon worked alongside Helen in the herb garden for many years. Not wishing to see Helen's legacy lost, Sharon accepted the project of clearing out the old plants, preparing the soil and replanting a variety of herbs and flowers. Sharon enlisted contributions from the Community to rejuvenate the herb garden the serene sight of beauty while also providing fertile ground for timeless herbs like basil, thyme and dill. Neighbors Home and Garden Center of Hellertown donated herb plants. The Borough of Hellertown donated gravel and labor to lay the path. Hellertown Historical Society members provided labor and needed water to maintain the plants.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Submit Articles or Stories

Hellertown Historical Society

Newsletter seeks any stories or news articles pertaining to Hellertown's History and its people. Anyone is encouraged to submit articles, stories or news to the

newsletter Managing Editor for consideration in upcoming editions. Submissions may be edited for content and/or space requirements. Please use the contact information on this page to submit your entry.



## President's Message:

*The following is an article written by Stacie Torkos and reprinted with permission from The Valley Voice:*

Hellertown Historical Society relies on volunteers, why are they so important to this group? Monetary support is vital to our organization however, volunteer support is equally important for our organization to survive. We are a small, dedicated group of volunteers who are passionate about preserving and sharing our beautiful historic site and Hellertown's history. It is a fun and fulfilling experience to work with volunteers who can count on each other and who share the same commitment to our mission and to serving the community.

Hellertown Historical Society is not a group, we are a family. As we grow and leave a bigger footprint in the community, our need for volunteers has become more critical than ever. Volunteer and intern opportunities are available in all areas of HHS, come join us and make an impact.

Hellertown Historical Society preserves the memory of those who have built and enriched our collective history as a community. It assures those who are active today that their story will be preserved. Who was Dimmick Park named after? Where was Lerch Dairy located? Who were the Oddfellows? These are the types of questions that make historical societies important. We create connections by putting those of us in the present in touch with the people of the past who shaped our landscape, named our landmarks and made decisions that ultimately affect us today. For example, third graders from Saucon Valley come on a field trip to learn about the grist mill site and Hellertown's history. When visiting the garden, the students learn hands-on what herbs were used for in Colonial times. *(Continued on Page 5)*

### Did You Know?

*By Bill Frey, Jr.*

Hellertown's old jail, built in 1872, came about as a result of Borough Council's first business action, the year Hellertown was incorporated.

The new "lock-up" only housed the occasional intoxicated person or maybe a horse thief. The one-room jail house is located between Main and Northampton Streets along Silver Creek.

The jail was built on order from Borough Council and Hellertown's first Chief Burgess, Thomas R. Laubach, on Laubach's property, along Laubach Street today.



Thomas R. Laubach  
1872-1873

**(Photo Courtesy HHS archives)**

The Borough stopped using the jail around 1900 when a few cells were constructed in the basement at the new Dewey Fire Station located on Saucon Street.

The jail was donated to the Hellertown Historical Society in 1986 by Mrs. Elizabeth Hess and her late husband, Howard Hess, who was also a Borough Mayor from 1946-1949 and the great grandson of Thomas R.

Laubach. A plaque was affixed to the structure in 1990 by the Historical Society attesting to its historical significance.



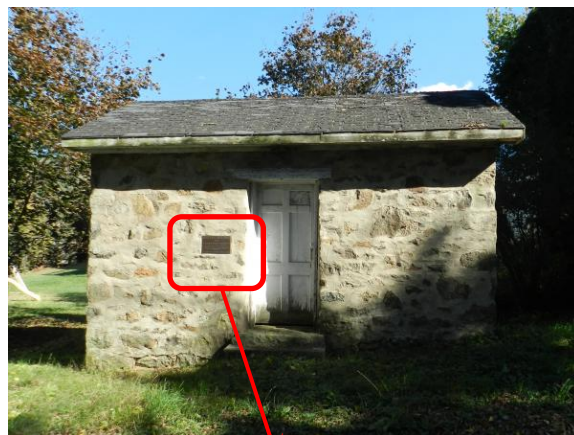
Howard S. Hess  
1946-1949

**(Photo Courtesy HHS archives)**

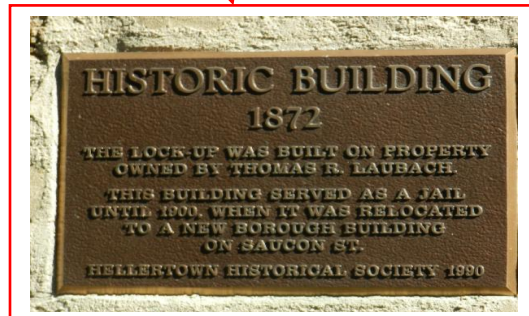
The Hellertown Historical Society is currently planning for the jail's restoration. The Society has applied for a grant to cover initial costs to reconstruct a roof and floor for the jail to keep the structure safe and secure from further damage.

The Society has also budgeted \$6000.00 to be used toward future restoration.

(Some information for this article obtained from The Morning Call article published November 30, 1986 by Rich Harry)



**Hellertown's  
First Jail (Photo  
Courtesy Josh  
Popichak)**



**Hellertown  
Historical  
Society Plaque  
(Photo Courtesy  
Josh Popichak)**

## Those Were The Days : Part 2

By Dolores Di Paolo  
*Halloween*

The Halloween season was always a big deal to us kids. We started planning what costumes we would wear and what activities we would participate in at the beginning of September. The first thing you did was sneak corn out of the farmer's corn field to use for tic-tacking. This corn field was where Walnut St. is now. We didn't take too much, just a few cobs, but those cobs were more than we bargained for. Once we got them home we had to take the corn off the cob. The first two cobs went great by the 3<sup>rd</sup> cob our hands started to hurt, by the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, our hands were so sore that we decided we had enough and gave the rest of our cobs away to other kids, other kids meaning the boys.

In Hellertown, Halloween was the whole month of October. We made our plans as to whose house we were going to hit with the corn and then set out with our bags of corn. Some people took the sound of corn hitting their windows in stride, but others came out yelling and threatening. If you didn't get out of there in time, you were stuck behind a bush shaking in your boots and hoping the man of the house didn't notice you. Boy, what fun!

Trick or Treating was great. We were allowed to trick or treat every night in October. You would go out the first week and when your candy ran out, you just went out again. We went to the houses you knew gave good stuff. Nobody liked to get an apple, but we all liked to get nickels and dimes, and you stayed far away from the house that made you sing a song for your treat. At the time I didn't know the song "Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat."

The Halloween parade was the highlight of the season. It was at night and back then it was always bitter cold and most kids were dressed in snow

suits, heavy winter coats, hats and gloves. One year the parade was about half way through and all of a sudden there was a cloud burst and everyone ran for cover. We were at the corner of Main and Water Sts. So we ran to the police station. Everyone else had the same idea and it got so crowded that my friend and I ended up in the jail cell. That's the only time I was in jail!

The parade had a long route. It started at Cherry Lane and went down Main to Saucon St. It went up Saucon St. to Tobias Dr. and down to the new fire house. It used to stop at the old fire house on Saucon, which is now apartments. Hellertown High School had a tumbler that tumbled in front of the band and she tumbled all the way down Main St. Once at the fire house the marchers were given a hot dog and a drink. They all stood around until the winners of each division were announced.

Those were the days we hoped would never end.

### *Christmas*

Christmas is such a magical time, when you're a kid. Being a kid in a small town is especially enchanting.

I remember going to Nicholas's 5 and 10 to see Santa. It was really neat because you had to go down stairs to see him. I don't remember ever going down stairs any other time of the year. It was exciting telling him what you wanted and you were certain he would make sure you would get it. But wait. Something isn't right here. There is another Santa down at Rauschers hardware store. How can that be? There is only one Santa, so which one is the real one? Mom told me they were both Santa's helpers.....yeah right, did you believe that one? I did for a few years. Geez, how they pulled the wool over our eyes.

There were colored lights on the poles going down Main St. After Thanksgiving the town would gather at the plaza to sing carols and some lucky kid would get to flip the switch and like magic the plaza lit up, and so did all the lights on Main St. Most of the

houses around town were decorated. Some just a bit and others went all out. It didn't matter how much or how little, it was still beautiful and got you in the mood for Christmas.

In the early days of Mountainview, the families were all pretty close. They decided to plant a pine tree at the corner of Birch Rd. and Juniper Rd. The whole neighborhood would gather around the tree and sing carols and then each child was given a small box of candy. I was too young to remember that, but my Brother has fond memories of it.

I was told that on the first floor of Reinhard School there was an atrium of sorts and a large tree was put in the middle of it and decorated. The children in the school stood around the tree and sang carols. Hellertown sure did a lot of singing at Christmas!

At one of the schools there was a Christmas pageant. Each child that had a part was responsible for making his or her costume. What they really meant was, each child's mother had to come up with something appropriate to wear. My little brother was a wise man. All my mother could come up with was his bathrobe. Oh my, I can't tell you the complaining he did about wearing his bathrobe in front of his peers. Guess what.....The two other wise men also came in their bathrobes!

The last and best thing I remember is the cut out cookies and a lot of tempting aromas filling the house. I know many mothers hid their baked goods so they would be around for Christmas company. I'm sorry to say, the joke was on them. The children always found the cookies and put a nice dent in the stash before Christmas.

Some very heart warning Christmas memories, back in the day.

**Need info about us?**  
**We have an email address for that...**  
[info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org)



## End Of Year Donation

By Gil Stauffer

### Please Consider Hellertown Historical Society when Making Your End-of-Year Donation Decisions!

You are probably receiving a ton of requests from non-profit organizations (such as ours) to keep them in mind when making year-end-contribution decisions. Well, please add us to your decision pot!

As you may have read in the pages of past newsletters – or perhaps viewed on our website – our board of directors has made the decision and the commitment to restore Hellertown’s first jail. The jail is in an alarming state of disrepair and will take in excess of \$12,000 to once again make it a viable part of Hellertown’s heritage and a destination for both tourists and history buffs. (See article, “Did You Know” on P. 2)

Earlier this year, we had placed a \$6,000 grant request application with the Lowes Foundation to help offset the jail’s projected repair and restoration budget. Unfortunately, due to the many, many grant requests received by Lowes, our application was not accepted.

However, we are pleased to announce that during 2016, a total of \$1,500 in “restricted” donations was received from various members and friends of Hellertown Historical Society. Can we please add your donation? Your funds will be restricted to restoring the Hellertown Jail and will not be used for any other purpose.

Our goal is to complete the jail during 2017. Please help by adding your name to the donor list!

**Please Visit Our Website**  
[www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org)  
**Over 18,000 Visitors Can't Be Wrong!**

## Herb Garden Dedicated...

*(Continued from Page 1)*

It was Helen’s endless dedication that the Woman’s Club wishes to acknowledge by dedicating the garden to her memory.

The Woman’s Club wishes to thank all those who donated items and labor to make this dream garden possible. The garden is still in need of some items – a water spigot installed nearby, an attractive arched arbor at the entrance to welcome visitors and signage explaining the various herbs, flowers and the purposes they served during the colonial period. Volunteers from the Community are needed for

‘hands-on’ maintenance as a gift the entire Community could continue to enjoy for many years to come.

Perhaps in time, all four of the herbs mentioned in Simon and Garfunkel’s song could be planted here in memory of Helen’s vision – A Gift To The Community.

Should anyone wish to donate time or materials to complete the needs or maintenance of the herb garden, please contact the Historical Society via email or phone using the contact information found on the front page of this Newsletter.



**Hellertown Historical Society Herb Garden (Against Grist Mill)**



**Hellertown Historical Society Herb Garden (Closer View)**



**Hellertown Historical Society Herb Garden (Adjacent to Mill Race)**

## President's Message...

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Why do you commit your free time to volunteering for this group? For me, history was just a bunch of dates and happenings that we had to memorize in grade school. It wasn't until my grandparents passed away-taking stories and family history with them-that I started to discover and explore the innate appreciation and desire I had for history. Volunteerism and helping others is coded into my DNA, so it was only a matter of time that I would find myself with a historical organization.

I started by volunteering and later interning with Historic Bethlehem Museum & Sites and the Moravian Historical Society. Both of these organizations have solid foundations of education, support, collection management and outreach. I became a sponge and soaked up everything that I could.

Born and raised in Williams Township and Hellertown, I thought to myself, "Why are you not volunteering with the Hellertown Historical Society?" So, I reached to HHS to find out how I could help and learned that there were plenty of opportunities in all areas of the organization. I became a volunteer and was excited to share the knowledge that I had obtained from working at the other historical societies. Next, I was invited to join the Board of Directors and later was elected President.

I have a full-time paid career in finance in addition to my full-time commitment as the HHS President. My service is challenging and rewarding. I love history. It's especially fun to discover something new in our archives. It is also mysterious as there are some pieces of history that we haven't been able to confirm-like where The Lost Tavern was located. I enjoy forming relationships with the people and the

partners in our community and I have a personal connection to Hellertown. I also take pleasure in hearing visitors share that they had a great experience with us or that our site is beautiful.

Highlight some accomplishments in the past 35 years: The lease for the Heller-Wagner Grist Mill property was granted to HHS in the early 1980's and the Society cleaned out and restored the dilapidated grist mill. The restoration took six years and was made possible by volunteers, donations and community support. Our organization also reached out to the public for donations of items from Hellertown and built a collection of local archives and artifact. Later, items were cataloged and were available for research or placed on display in the museum in the grist mill or the HHS barn. HHS was also gifted the deed to Hellertown's first jail. HHS has begun working on the first phase of restoring the jail and is accepting donations for this effort. In the past 10 years, HHS invested in office equipment, software and reference materials to preserve and care for our collections.

We brought new people into our community through museum tours, special events, volunteer opportunities, student internships, educational programming and more. The Tavern Room was offered to the public as a site rental to help fund-raising efforts. In fact, the popularity of the Tavern Room has been a blessing and it breathed new life into our organization by providing funds to support our mission and to maintain our historic site.

Over the years, HHS has become a destination for everyone in our community. We implemented new outreach efforts to connect with people of all different ages and from all different places. Although we love

history, you don't have to love it to visit us.

Future plans: The public will have greater access to connect with us and our collections as we implement new museum software and embrace offerings of new technology. Our goal is to create digitized collections and searchable databases. We will continue to expand public and educational programming. My dream is for the mill to be operational, even if it is only a section. We can explain how the mill worked, but to see it in action would be the ultimate learning experience.

Our community connections and partnerships will grow. Through the popularity of the Tavern Room, we will continue to bring more people to Hellertown and introduce them to what our community has to offer.

Our site will continue to be a destination that has something for everyone.

Stacie Torkos, President  
Hellertown Historical Society

**Be Sure to  
Visit Our Gift  
Shop on the  
HHS Website  
for Great Gift  
Items to Finish  
Your  
Christmas  
Shopping List**

# Holiday Open House

Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> (Snow Date: Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**Doors Open at 6PM for Food, Tours and More!**

**Including the Seasonal Opening of Our Train Display\***

**Musical Showcase Begins at 7PM**

Featuring Norris and James and

The Lehigh Valley Idols



## Shopping at the Mill and Santa Visit

Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup> Noon-4PM

Stop, Shop and Give Santa Your List!  
Free Raffle, Refreshments & More

- Handmade Accessories
- Delectable Chocolates
  - Jewelry
- Other Unique Gift Items

All Ages Welcome (Minimal Donation for Photos)

Train Display Featuring Village of Replica Hellertown Buildings  
(In Miller House Basement - Not ADA Accessible)

**\*Train Display Also Runs Sundays Dec. 4 - Dec. 18 from 1-4PM**



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