



## *A special thanks to staff and volunteers*

**By Amy Leiser**

*Executive Director*

For anyone who has stopped by the Stroud Mansion, you can't help but notice how busy the library and museum are on a daily basis. Members of the staff may be giving tours or working on the latest fundraiser, volunteers might be assisting researchers or completing some office work. One thing is obvious: everyone is here because he or she believes in the organization and in the importance of preserving local history.

It's interesting how cyclical visitation is at the Stroud Mansion. Summers are extremely busy, not only with new tourists but also with local residents either visiting by themselves or accompanied by out-of-town guests, looking for activities. Many people stop by the Mansion to tour the old home or to inquire about the existence of a summer

camp they attended as children. Some tourists come back to Monroe County to celebrate a wedding anniversary and visit the historical association to see old photographs or postcards of the resort at which they had honeymooned.

Fall and spring bring out the genealogists, searching for their long-lost ancestors. Genealogists seem to enjoy the weather during these months, when they can walk through local cemeteries in search of the headstones of their forefathers without the summer heat or winter snow. Throughout the winter months, we have fundraisers that welcome many members and friends to the Stroud Mansion. Christmastime is particularly busy as many guests take a break from holiday shopping to attend our functions and view the beautiful Christmas decorations adorning our historic home.

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The Monroe County Historical Association staff at the Annual Meeting in February.

**From left:**

Administrative assistant Brianne Shamburger, collections specialist Bret Fowler, executive director Amy Leiser and bookkeeper Margie Manner.



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**Administrative Assistant**

Brianne Shamburger

**Collections Specialist**

Bret Fowler

**Bookkeeper** | Margie Manner

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## 2014 Meetings

The MCHA Board of Directors meets the fourth Tuesday of most months at 7 p.m. at the Stroud Mansion.

August 26

September 23

October 28

November 25

**The mission of the Monroe County Historical Association is to promote, protect and preserve the rich history of Monroe County, Pa.**

## MCHA Calendar

**Tuesday, August 12**

### Bus trip: 'Costumes of Downton Abbey' at Winterthur Museum

Guided tour of Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Del. Sponsored trip includes bus, entrance to exhibition, lunch.

*Reservations required.*

**Saturday, August 30**

### Olde Time Fun at the Mansion

10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Stroud Mansion, 900 Main St., Stroudsburg.

This fun family event will be part of the Stroudfest downtown festival. Childrens games and activities. Event is free and open to the public; donations appreciated. Stroud Mansion open house with free tours.

## Family Reunions

**SCHÜRCH** [Shirk, Sherk, Sherrick]

**Family Association Reunion**, August 1-2, Millersville University. Tours and other activities. Learn about Schürch ancestors. Auction includes 19th century sewing machine made by inventor Joseph Shirk.

[www.schurchfamilyassociation.net](http://www.schurchfamilyassociation.net)

Sue Shirk, 717-394-2947

[suesbug@msn.com](mailto:suesbug@msn.com)

**LaBAR Family 89th Annual Reunion**,

Sunday, August 3, Weona Park, Pen Argyl.

Bring lunch, plus covered dish to share.

Arrive at noon; meeting at 1 p.m., followed by a lunch, cake walk, auction. Bring homemade crafts/items to be auctioned.

Annette LeBar, 570-421-1019

[seminoleindian2000@yahoo.com](mailto:seminoleindian2000@yahoo.com)

## Thanks to volunteers and staff

Continued from Page 1

No matter the season, the MCHA staff and volunteers are always on hand to help anyone who walks through our doors. Because of the common bond of assisting others and promoting the local history that we share, the staff and volunteers have become very close with one another. When you share an office or workspace, or gather around a small table for lunch, you can't help but get to know each other very well.

From the exterior, the Stroud Mansion may seem to be just another large structure in downtown Stroudsburg, but inside there is a cozy atmosphere of friendship, teamwork and camaraderie. Volunteers and staff truly share a feeling of pride in contributing our own unique talents to the organization. I am so lucky to work alongside these dedicated individuals – and there is always room for more!

### New addition to MCHA family

Executive Director Amy Leiser and her husband, John, welcomed the birth of their daughter, Greta in April. Everyone is happy and healthy and doing well. Welcome Greta!

Over the past three months, I have been especially grateful to my staff, volunteers, and members of the board of directors who have stepped in to lend a helping hand while I was on maternity leave.

The Monroe County Historical Association is truly lucky to have so many individuals who care deeply about local history and are willing to roll up their sleeves to ensure the Monroe County Historical Association can be the best organization it can be. Thank you for all that you do for our organization and for me!



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# Funding secured, Stroud Mansion renovations expected to be completed this year

This fall will be particularly busy at the Stroud Mansion, as three major projects identified by the Facilities Committee earlier this year are expected to be completed.

The first project involves replacing the 1920s slate roof. The second project is the replacement of the outdated 1966 gas furnace with an energy efficient model, and the third is the restoration of the front door and the iron pintels on which it rests.

The total cost of these three important projects is \$128,200. Not one of them is a small task, and the completion of all three will keep everyone busy.

The board of directors is extremely pleased to announce that funding has been secured for all three of these projects, thanks to:

- The generosity of the ESSA Foundation.
- The generosity of the R. Dale and Frances M. Hughes Foundation.
- Donations from the MCHA membership.
- Money granted from the Pennsylvania Department of

Community & Economic Development's Local Share Accounts, part of Monroe County's share of state gambling revenues from Mount Airy Casino Resort.

Although costly, these initiatives are essential to the future of the Stroud Mansion. A reliable, water-tight roof, an efficient heating system, and a functioning front door are vital to the operation of the historical association.

MCHA board member Ken Sandri, chairman of the Facilities Committee and preservation and resource manager at Grey Towers National Historic Site, has graciously stepped up to oversee all three of these projects. His knowledge of the architecture of historic buildings and the proper methodologies involved in renovation and restoration will be invaluable as the board awards contracts and work begins.

Before the year's end, look for scaffolding to go up around the Stroud Mansion, a large old boiler to be hauled out of the basement doors, and a front door with a new coat of paint to welcome guests.

**T H A N K   Y O U !**

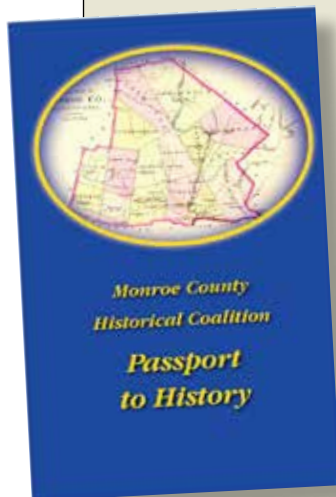


## FRED WARING: A PENNSYLVANIA TREASURE

The new exhibit at the Stroud Mansion marks the 30th anniversary since the passing of renowned local musician, band-leader and radio star Fred Waring.

Items on display include artifacts, sheet music, photos and personal items that belonged to Waring, including the Waring Blender.

*Continues through Dec. 20*



## 'PASSPORT TO HISTORY' LAUNCHED

The Monroe County "Passport to History" is now available at the Stroud Mansion and many other locations.

This 40-page booklet profiles more than 30 historical sites, providing photos, details, address, directions or GPS coordinates. Passports can be stamped at many of the sites, providing a record of visits to local history.

"Passport to History" is a project of the Monroe County Historical Coalition, made up of historical groups working to preserve the region's historical and cultural landscape. Your donation of \$2 for the Passport helps perpetuate this program for county residents and visitors. *See details at [www.monroehistorical.org](http://www.monroehistorical.org).*





## Welcome, New Members

Elizabeth Anderson  
E.J. Bassler  
The Bentz Family  
Margaret Brennan  
C. Allen & Phyllis Conklin  
Dan & Karen Corveleyn  
Jim Dellaria & family  
Sandy Dietz  
Chris Dudley  
Pam Dunlap  
Norman Fayne  
The Giunta Family  
Theresa Gress  
Dr. & Mrs. Donald W. Hiemenz  
Jeffry and Valerie Higbee  
Theresa Hunter  
Paul Jones and family  
Jean Karalunas  
Jake & Paula Kodnovich  
Gary Koerner  
Barry Kwasny  
Robert LaBar  
The Mandry Family  
Terry & Beth Martin  
Vivian Morris  
Sherry Payne  
Scott & Ana Price  
The Walter Price Family  
John & Deborah Procopio  
Susan Reilly  
Aaron & Meredith Rettaliata  
Susan Rosa  
Eric Rump  
Brad Seid  
The Smale Family  
Brenda Staples  
Brad & Caroline Strasser  
Karen Tetor  
Charles & Bonnie Vogt  
Ronald & Joan Vican  
Joyce Weidinger  
Charlie & Sue Wilson  
Kevin & Cecilia Yost  
Robert & Janice Young

## *'History in Bloom' garden tour a huge success with splendid weather*

On Saturday, June 21 the Monroe County Historical Association hosted its second garden tour fundraiser: "History in Bloom," a tour of historic and south Stroudsburg's gardens. It was a perfect day to spend outdoors with blue skies, sunshine, low humidity and a lovely breeze.

Twelve gardens were featured on the tour, in both historic downtown Stroudsburg and south Stroudsburg. The tour began at the charming Bryant Park, which is cared for by community volunteers. From there, guests could easily walk to the other locations in south Stroudsburg.

Homeowners and volunteers were present at each garden to share information on gardening methods, the tools used to create each garden and to share ideas. Visitors were even fortunate enough to receive a lesson on beekeeping at the garden of Caroline and Brad Strasser, who explained their decision to keep dandelions (the bees' favorite food) and their efforts to save the bees from extinction.

This fundraiser would not have been possible without all of our many wonderful volunteers and supporters who came together to share their time and gardening enthusiasm. More than 60 people bought tickets in advance, almost triple the number of advance tickets purchased in 2012!

The MCHA staff extends a very heartfelt thank you to the History in Bloom Committee, who put in much time and effort to ensure this event was a success!

Chair Kathy Boyle worked tirelessly to organize every detail. She secured the gardens featured on the tour, recruited volunteers, gathered the lovely raffle items and mustered the many sponsors that supported this event. Evelyn Smith and Donna Bisset organized the delightful reception to thank the volunteers and garden owners for supporting this fundraiser and MCHA.

We would also like to give a HUGE thank you to our two partners in this event. The Gallery at Liztech donated the beautiful "Thanks a Bunch" pin and \$25 gift card to our raffle, as well as 10 percent of sales with presentation of a garden tour flyer. Weber's Rimrock Gardens donated 10 percent of plant sales made the day of the tour.

Congratulations to our raffle prize winners: Blanca Cordero, Millie King and Christine Wilkins.

## **Thank you to our garden tour sponsors**

BJ's	Kistler Printing	The Home Depot
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Coolbaugh Township	Ray M. Flad Plantscape	Vogel's
Historical Association	Soho in the Burg	Walmart
Gotta Go Potties	Stout's Mower Service	Charlie and Sue Wilson
International Cut	The Gallery at Liztech	



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# John Summerfield Staples | In the Shadow of History

## Retreat to Stroudsburg

PART 2 of 5  
By John H. Abel

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*Editor's note: This is second part of the story of John Summerfield Staples, a young man from Stroudsburg who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Installments will appear in each edition of THE FANLIGHT through Spring 2015 and the anniversary of the ending of the Civil War.*

New Bern, N. C., May 1863 — Home and family seemed a distant memory. In the delirium of fever, brought on by typhoid, John Summerfield Staples struggled to recall the events of the past seven months. He concentrated on separating reality from dreams. There was no doubt about the reality of death. They had buried three men, boys really, along the route of march, all lost to the same disease he now lay stricken with.

The fever waxed and waned and carried his mind through alternating levels of consciousness. He thought he was in a tent but couldn't be sure. He had no idea what day of the week it was. As for the month, he thought it was May, but the trees and the temperatures, so unlike home, only added to his confusion. He was certain they had reached North Carolina but couldn't recall if they had entered the town of New Bern, which was their objective. He thought he had been wounded, but couldn't recall a battle. Perhaps a sniper's ball had found its mark?

He was sure Rachael had come to see him off and had touched his hand affectionately. He recalled days of endless marching, setting up camp, and gathering firewood. With blurred recollection he thought of evenings spent around campfires listening to stories that couldn't possibly be true and eating monotonous food that had no flavor. He declined participation in the popular games of cards and dice and yet, somewhere in the recess of memory, he felt a connection to this peculiar Army life and those with whom he shared it.

From somewhere nearby he heard a brusque, masculine voice declare him unfit for combat or any further service. He vaguely heard the words "discharge him with a Surgeons Certificate and send him home." Lucidity surrendered to fever and his mind and body retreated to the world of the deathly ill.



For three days and nights he lay motionless on a make-shift bunk in a train that once carried men to the battlefield. He was aware only of an intense pain in his gut and a relentless thirst. He had no concept of time or place. He was surrounded by others that were just as sick. At times he was vaguely cognizant of men without arms, without legs, with horrible, gaping wounds in their necks and faces. They floated in and out of his fever-impaired vision like ghosts in some macabre nightmare.

He was sure some of his traveling companions were already dead. His mother's face hovered just above him. As he made an effort to raise his arm, the image melted away.

The screeching sound of metal on metal and hissing steam stopped the train and brought him back from a dreamless sleep. He heard the shuffle of heavy boots and the murmur of tired voices. He was flat on his back but he was moving, carried along by some unseen and unexplained force.

Working in practiced unison, four orderlies placed his stretcher on the platform of the Dansbury train station, in line with five others. Two were completely shrouded. Sunlight washed across his face for the first time in more than a week. He inhaled deeply and became aware of air that carried a fragrance instead of an odor.

Through squinting eyes he saw his mother's face. He raised his hand and touched it, puzzled that the image didn't disappear. He heard her voice and felt her hands caress his face. Tears of joy ran down her cheeks and on to his. He tried to speak, no words would come. John Summerfield was home.

He passed the month of June quietly, resolved to regain the health of adolescence. Between the wrens and the roosters there was no late sleeping but staying in bed past sunrise had never been his habit. His father built a large, sturdy rocker and placed it on the porch. From

Story continues, Page 6



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appreciate their support.*

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*The Monroe County Historical  
Association receives generous  
support from the Cherry Lane  
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Frances M. Hughes Foundation,  
and the Monroe County  
Commissioners.*

*Thank you!*

Continued from Page 5

mid-morning until late afternoon he occupied the comfortable chair. His mother constantly adjusted the pillow and quilt that never seemed to be where she wanted them.

He had always been a reader. The family Bible became a constant companion. Neighbors lent books. He read the town dailies with keen interest, keeping up on the war news, experiencing dismay at the mounting death toll and deep sadness when he recognized a name on the "Killed in Action" list.

He slept, he dreamt, he thought of those who would not return, and those who had suffered crippling wounds. He fought battles of shame and guilt, but knew this disease was neither his fault nor something he had used to escape the horrors of the battlefield.

Rachael visited regularly and read to him, shared tidbits of borough gossip and kept his spirits up by planning a walk around town on the 4th of July. The doctor and the druggist arrived weekly to check his progress and many local folks stopped by to wish him well. His mother guarded him like a sentry, instinctively knowing when well-wishers had stayed too long, always managing to send them on their way without giving offense.

The telegraph clicked to life and Robert Jonas pulled his chair in close to the cluttered desk. Pencil in hand he would write in the abbreviated style of a professional newsman. He had been in this office since it opened in 1855, he knew his job and, more importantly, he understood it. He could separate the important from the mundane and he knew how and when to be discreet.

Earlier he had dated his pad: 02 July 1863. He sat, motionless; the message came rapidly, the format concise.

GETTYSBURG PA. LARGE FIGHT,  
MULTIPLE BATTLES, MANY DEAD.

He knew the casualty report would come last.

CASREP: 142nd PA.  
BENSLEY, C., GARRIS, A., LABAR, L.

Damn, he knew the parents of each one. The key sprang back to life.

90TH PA. HOWELL, H., CHAPLIN

The key fell silent. He stared at the pad in disbelief. Even war has rules. You don't kill ministers.

He folded his note and tucked it in his vest. He flipped the door sign to 'closed' and exited the tiny, paper-strewn room. He walked past the grocer and the office of the Monroe Democrat and felt the rhythm of the pounding printing presses in the sidewalk. He continued west on Main. John Staples would learn of the death of his friend from him, not the evening paper.

Standing at the pulpit of Rev. Howell's church, John Staples concluded the eulogy of his friend. As the congregation began a hymn, he felt determined to do something to honor the memory of his fallen companion. He would pray on this, knowing God would direct him.

Direction came in early September, 1863, in the form of a broadside, prominently displayed, at the Stroudsburg post office.

The War Department had an urgent need for skilled carpenters to work in the Navy Yards in Washington, D.C. There was more information but he didn't take time to read it. He had to get home and pack for his trip to D.C.

*Continued in Fall 2014 Fanlight*





## How things change and remain the same!

I almost thought we were moving to a new location with all the activity at the mansion this week. Then I discovered that the tables and chairs were going to south Stroudsburg for something called a garden tour.

I was not quite sure what a garden tour was, but I did know where south Stroudsburg was. In fact, some of my relatives lived there at one time. Being a full-time resident of the Stroud Mansion, I thought it was important that I be prepared to share information about this area of our community.

In our vertical files, I found a copy of a 1911 advertisement for the sale of lots in Collins Court in south Stroudsburg. Although most of the street names on the tract plan were different than they are today, I did recognize Broad Street. Amenities to attract potential buyers included macadam roads, concrete sidewalks, sewage, and ornamental trees. I chuckled when I read, “as fast as dirt can fly the estate is being completed.” It appeared that the price of \$8 to \$30 per foot of frontage would catch readers’ attention.

I decided I would accompany our MCHA volunteers to this garden tour and find out exactly what it was. First, I was amazed that there was no trolley line from Seventh Street to Park Avenue. Although I am inclined to live in the past, I was pleased to see a beautiful new bridge crossing the



McMichael Creek at Seventh Street. The first bridge was built with private funds and subsequently wagons and automobiles were charged a toll of 10 cents. This did not please Stroudsburg residents, and by 1929, the county commissioners with court approval closed the bridge for repairs. When it was opened again, there were no more tolls.

On our trip to south Stroudsburg, there was considerable conversation about gardens. Of course this brought back memories of the LaBar Rhododendron Nursery, 90 acres developed by W.K. LaBar in 1914. People traveled great distances to enjoy the beauty of the nursery, including its breathtaking reflecting pool. The nursery was sold in 1978 and is now the location of LaBar Village.

By the 1950s, south Stroudsburg had matured into a tightly-knit community. Residents provided

snippets of their childhood in south Stroudsburg. In the 1940s and '50s, children rollerskated on the sidewalk, played cops-and-robbers in the ravine where Interstate 80 is now, and walked to school. Those that lived on the east side went to Ramsey, those on the west attended Morey. All came home for lunch! In later years they went to high school together.

A strong sense of community is still evident in south Stroudsburg. When the corner of Park Avenue and Bryant Street became an eyesore, individuals such as Holly Gravel, Ellen Phraner, Brad Cooper and many others decided to transform it into a beautiful park. The park has become a center of community cohesiveness, providing a playground for children, a “bring one, take one” book exchange, a center for community activities, and simply a place to contemplate the beauty of nature.

I spent the morning helping sell garden tour tickets in the park’s gazebo and then went off to enjoy the delightful gardens on the tour.

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*Monroe Mouse talked with Pam Hoy and Susan Kovarick for this story, and used the following in his research: Historic Monroe County articles by Dr. John C. Appel in the Pocono Shopper, Nov. 8 and 15, 1995; the Pocono Record, Dec. 23, 1978; The Times-Democrat, Christmas 1911*



**MONROE COUNTY  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

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