

THE LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Friends of Old Annville
P O Box 99 Annville PA 17003

The Shertzer Home

President's Message from Owen Moe



The nearly 200 year old home at 125 West Main Street qualifies in a number of ways as an Annville landmark. John Shertzer, a prosperous Annville resident who had begun manufacturing pianos in Annville prior to 1800, built the large home in 1814. Built prior to the widespread use of brick in this area, the home was constructed using squared-off logs. Shertzer established the first merchandise store in Annville in the west section of the house. The building has since served as a jewelry store, a post office, an insurance company, the home of the prothonotary, and the office of the late physician, Dr. Warren Brubaker. More

recently the building housed Darcy's and The Flower Garden. I should also mention as an aside that county historian Joseph Warner noted in 1909 that two Shertzer pianos were still in use in Annville.

Annville almost lost the Shertzer home to fire this summer. I remember clearly the sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach as I watched from a distance under the sidewalk awning at Kettering Corner. The flames were literally leaping out of a gaping hole in the roof. The firemen were hard at work battling the blaze, but the situation was grim. As the firemen removed upper-level facing boards to force water into crevices of persistent smoldering, we could see some of the underlying squared-off log construction of the original building. It was obviously a well-built structure as much of the log construction withstood the fire. It was difficult to watch what I feared was the loss of a key building in our historic town center.



Eileen and Nevin Hoover, the owners of the building and of the Flower Garden business that it housed, made the decision to save and restore the badly-damaged building. Reynolds Restoration Services of Harrisburg is now in the process of carrying out that rehabilitation. It would have been easy for the owners and contractors to write the building off after such extensive damage and move to entirely new construction. It is fortunate for Annville that the Hoovers were committed to saving the Annville landmark. Mrs. Hoover indicated that the home would become their residence and the Flower Garden shop will continue to operate out of the building in the rear of the property. We thank the Hoovers for their gracious and enduring gift to the town of Annville.

A Vision on West Queen Street

“You have to have a vision”, says Marie Kreamer who, along with her husband Jeff, is tackling the job of bringing 533 West Queen Street back to its original 18th century splendor. And of course this has to be a sustaining vision, as the realities of the labor, the dirt of centuries, and the seemingly endless job of unveiling this beautiful home send the Kreamer’s back to their home in Mr. Union a couple days a week to breathe freely and regain a sense of normalcy.



If not with all the comforts of home yet, Jeff and Marie Kreamer, along with their boys Duke and Radar (Welsh Corgis), are camped on Queen Street in the heated side of the home through the greater part of each week. Both musicians, Jeff and Marie have a heavy travel schedule, yet have done wonders in just weeks since their September settlement. Following possession, Jeff bought himself a new toy - a forty foot boom lift - which allowed him to tackle the essentials of making the exterior of the house as airtight as possible for the winter. After cleaning off the marvelous pent eaves (jutting out over the first floor to add a bit of shelter for windows and doors), pointing, and waterproofing, the Kremers

turned to inside work in the cold months, but note that a new roof is in their future.

While this author won’t hazard a guess at the number of rooms or their exact placement, having followed Marie, Duke & Radar through the home in a daze of old-house-adoration, suffice it to say that the 2 ½ story, five bay Georgian is large! Built about 1795 by Abraham Herr, who owned and operated the gristmill at that time, the home speaks to the wealth of its owner via its large high-ceilinged rooms, numerous windows, extensive and ornate millwork, and the heavy use of the color blue - unearthed by the Kremers beneath centuries of over-painting and papering. Despite the magazine-fostered notion that colonial homes were whitewashed and painted in muted hues, most stately homes of the period were rich in color. Blue, in particular was an expensive pigment, with brilliant cobalts and teals denoting status and wealth.



Cut right into the stone hillside, a tour of the basement at 533 reveals walls where the natural stone has been sheered away to a height of four to five feet, making further foundation unnecessary. Set stone begins where the natural rock ends. But just as only one side of the home has heat, only one side has a basement. Marie recalls an early moment when Jeff ventured into the east crawlspace via an exterior ‘hole’. Cautioning her to sit right there with her phone in case there was a need to dial 911 for extraction services, Jeff did climb out under his own steam and reported that the flooring “looks like new” from the underside.

But though we had ventured down stone steps into the basement, Marie led the way down yet another flight of stone stairs to an astonishing sub-basement cold storage cellar. A high, cavernous



and vaulted room, with a pair of air vents at each end, this remarkably large storage space is plastered and whitewashed and much larger than the average home's cold cellar. One can only think that this vast area must have preserved food for the families and workers in the compound that centered on the mill. Although they have not yet found evidence of a spring house, Marie mentions that a stillhouse, tannery, and barns formed part of the early enclave.

Back on the first floor, beginning in the large center hall, Marie describes their encounter with dropped ceilings that, throughout much of the first floor, cut off doorways and windows and obscured the enormous crown moldings, transoms, and elegant proportions of the rooms. Along with an awkward added wall that blocked the view of the magnificent staircase and hallway's keystone-centered arch, these intrusions were rapidly dispatched, and the resulting effect is truly magnificent. The deeply tiered crown moldings, alone, must be 20 inches deep, and the broad arch, and raised panels and scrollwork of the staircase are outstanding - truly the 18th century version of 'all the bells and whistles'.



lovely proportions restored.

The Kreamers have also run pipe to serve as conduit to get new electrical and plumbing lines from one side of the home to another, removed snarls of ancient wiring that was exposed with removal of the drop ceilings, and completed an enormous number of jobs as preliminary steps to restoring the integrity of the home.

Indicating that they're presently working to finish upstairs space to create a bedroom which will allow the family to move upstairs and complete the first floor, Marie explains that the room currently used as a kitchen will eventually become an office and study. Featuring a great corner fireplace (shown), that is presently diminished by an exposed waste pipe, the room has already been relieved of a 1930's staircase, and with planned removal of the waste pipe, will have its

Throughout the first floor rooms, rich with impressive millwork, Marie reports that along with remnants of 19th century wallpaper, whole rooms had been shrouded in contact paper. Peeling it away, the Kreamers revealed the original shellac-grained wainscot, chair railings, and surprisingly sound plaster. Deep windows flanked by raised paneling are found throughout, and as more of the house is unveiled with removal of paneling, Marie is hopeful that the balance of the woodwork will be found intact. An artist who works with pierced paper, primitive painting, and graining, she plans to restore the original surface finish wherever possible.

Looking at the hall, Marie notes that they have no plans to build closets and, instead, will use era-appropriate cupboards and wardrobes. Already she has found a great German schrank for the rear hallway. Other fascinating features of the home include a massive walk-in fireplace with surrounding chimney cupboards, an Indian door, of the type that had a sliding panel, and massive strap hinges. While the outline of Moravian lock plates remain, newer hardware has been employed, but the Kreamers hope to replace this with original locks in days ahead. Evidence of smoking meat appears in odd places within the home, and as Radar and

Duke shepherd us from one area to another and step gingerly around gaps in the large attic's floor, we even find charred ceiling and hand wrought meat hooks in the attic beams.



Asked about the construction date of the home, Marie notes that a published history of the Herr Family fills in many gaps. And on the topic of genealogy she notes that Jeff is a direct descendant of Conrad Weiser. Describing him (Jeff) as a natural peacemaker, Marie believes that it has to be a genetic inheritance. With family ties to Lancaster County, the Kreamers presently retain their home in Mr. Union where they tracked down the Herr home in the course of an online search for a property with a creek.

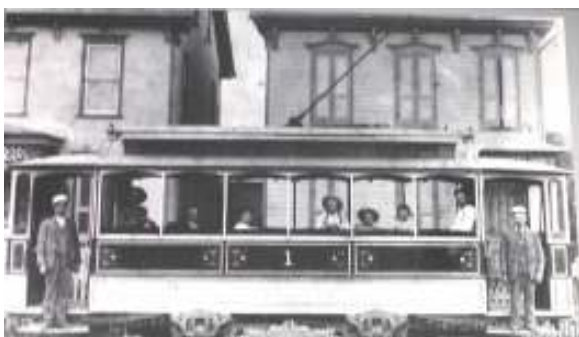
While we hope to follow the progress on this important Annville home, I hope you'll join with FOOA in welcoming the Kreamers to Annville and expressing appreciation for their significant contribution to the Old Annville Community. As noted, both musicians, Marie teaches violin and fiddle, and Jeff's classic 1941 bass can be seen sitting in the midst of the upstairs construction zone. Marie adds that Jeff's background in bridge construction enables him to tackle a myriad of jobs associated with the restoration of 533 West Queen, so this grand old lady is on its way to much better days. ■

2011 EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

FOOA's Calendar of Events for 2011 is beginning to unfold, so please mark the following important dates:

- Quittie Park Spring CleanupSaturday, April 16th
- Historic Old Annville DaySaturday, June 11th
- Façade Grant Round 3June 30th

In the meantime, if you have an idea for a program, or if you'd like to host a program at your old Annville home, please be sure to let us know.



TRAIN & TROLLEY TUESDAYS

This winter on Tuesday evenings at 7 PM, Mr. Ed Wagner will be showing a series of old train and trolley videos that he has collected.

The videos will be projected on a screen at the station. The weekly programs will run for 60-75 minutes. We invite all train enthusiasts to attend.

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The Friends of Old Annville Train Station is open to visitors Tuesday, 7-9 PM, Saturdays, 9 AM-12 noon, or upon request.

The Station is also available for parties and meetings. Please write Friends of Old Annville, P.O. Box 99, Annville 17003, or call (717) 867-0770 for information.

Membership Renewal

Please remember that your MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE can be found on the mailing label of this issue of The Landmark. Please send your dues and address change to: Rachel Noll, 1673 Louser Road, Annville, PA, 17003-8856. Have questions? Call: (717) 867-2137.

Individual & Student \$ 5.00	Family (2+ persons) \$ 10.00
Business \$ 25.00	Friend of FOOA \$ 50.00
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★ Denotes Friend of FOOA

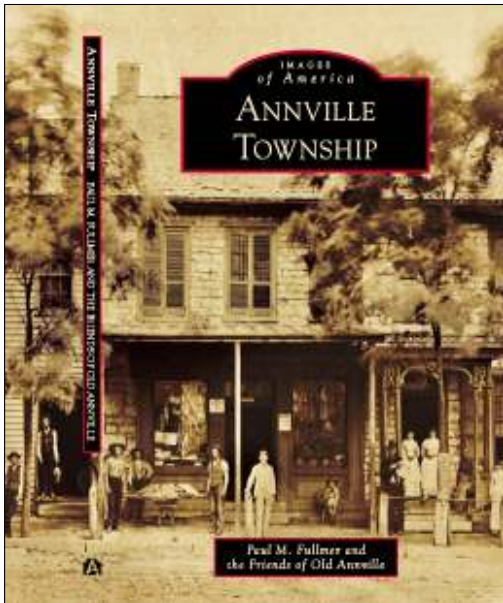
§§ Denotes Benefactor of FOOA

And please don't forget that a membership in FOOA makes a great gift to welcome a new neighbor or honor a special occasion.



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OLD ANNVILLE

COMING TO A BOOKSTORE NEAR YOU !

Editors at Arcadia Publishing Company have recently informed FOOA of a June 10 publication date for *Annville Township*.

As a part of Arcadia's Images of America Series, the book will present 225 historic pictures of Annville in 128 pages. A unique feature of the book is its organization in the form of two walking tours, one covering the west side of town and another covering the

east side. Captions indicate the address at which each picture was taken, as well as of brief history of the address. We appreciate the many contributions from families throughout the area; many of the pictures have never been published before.

Copies will be available for purchase on Historic Old Anville Day on June 11 for \$21.95. Shortly thereafter they will also be available locally as well as at Amazon and Barnes and Nobles.