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# THE LANDMARK

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

## Historic Preservation & the Ripple Effects of the Greater Annville Committee (1991-2007)

### President's Message, by Michael Schroeder

“A Plan for Annville - Discussion” was the subject of agenda item number 7 - the first known documentary reference to what became the Greater Annville Committee. The agenda item appears in a letter of August 16, 1990 from Stephan Vegoe of the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce to nine of Annville's prominent citizens, inviting them to an “Annville Area [Breakfast] Meeting” at the Olde Annville Inn on August 24. On October 8, Allen Yingst, President of the Annville Township Board of Commissioners, wrote to local attorney John Feather, also at the meeting. “I want to thank you for your interest in Annville's Future Planning,” he wrote. “I am positive our efforts will produce a new and exciting outlook for Annville Township.”

Nearly five years later, on March 17, 1995, Commissioner Yingst wrote to Kenneth Wood, Vice President of Wimpey Minerals, Inc. in Annville. “Something extraordinary has been happening in Annville over the past few years,” he wrote. “A dedicated group of community leaders have volunteered to improve the appearance of community, strengthen its economic viability and preserve its heritage.” Al Yingst was describing the work of the Greater Annville Committee - a quasi-public civic organization officially formed in January 1991, whose work continued through the completion of the Downtown Redevelopment Project in 2007.

The story of those 16 years of the Greater Annville Committee - including the formation of the National Historic District and the Historic Architectural Review Board, the completion of the Downtown Redevelopment Project, and more - are

told in a rich collection of documents recently donated to FOOA by John Feather.

Combing through the worn file folders jam-packed with decades-old memoranda & legal documents & scribbled notes on legal pads & folded-up blueprints, sprinkled with the occasional newspaper clipping and dinner receipt and, in one case, brainstorming notes on a napkin, I'm struck by the sheer amount of labor that went into these various projects, and the dedication of the folks who undertook it.

**“Something extraordinary has been happening in Annville over the past few years.”**

Not surprisingly, certain key individuals populate many of these documents, the engines behind many of the changes in the downtown district in the 1990s and 2000s: not only Al Yingst and John Feather but Dick Charles, Fred Richter and Tanya Richter, Kathy Moe, Ruth Hein, Nick Viscome, Carol Hickey, Carl Gacono, Steve Kreamer, Phil Feather, and others. Without the years'-long efforts of these community leaders and citizen-activists, our downtown district would remain - as many Annville residents saw it in 1995, according to a survey undertaken at the time - congested and unappealing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Annville citizens return wish list,” *The Daily News* (Lebanon, PA), 24 July 1995.

It also strikes me that preserving this material is integral to FOOA's mission – preserving not only buildings, but the documentary evidence showing the nuts-and-bolts of how Annville's community leaders realized their vision of a reimagined and greatly improved downtown.

I've been thinking a lot about historic preservation lately, not only as president of FOOA but also for my "Introduction to Public History" course at LVC, which I'll be teaching for the first time this spring. Defined by the leading professional organization in the field as "History@Work," public history is "the many and diverse ways that history is put to work in the world."<sup>2</sup> Students in the course will "adopt" a local historical museum or society and undertake 20-30 hours of volunteer service-learning at that institution, acquiring practical, hands-on experience doing what historians do: preserving, interpreting, and narrating the past.

"Oral history and public memory" is the main topic in Week 6. Maybe one of my students will adopt FOOA for her service-learning project and help to organize and interpret this goldmine of material, which at some point will end up in FOOA's Electronic Archives. Maybe she'll video-interview key players from the Greater Annville Committee.

Historic preservation is about the past, but it's also about the future. It's about preserving and building on the collective memory of our community. It's about digging through piles of decades-old papers, where if we're lucky – as we most certainly are in this case – we'll find inspiration in the vision, dedication, perseverance, and hard work of those who came before.



*Above: the bulging box of papers on the Greater Annville Committee donated to FOOA by John Feather. Left: the box's label.*

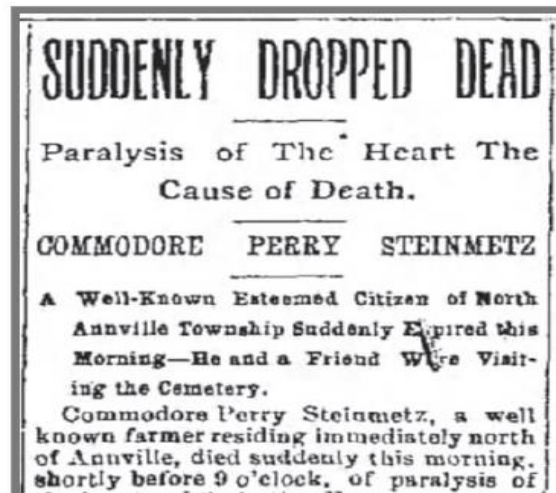
**The Friends of Old Annville, Inc.**, an all-volunteer, non-profit corporation with over 400 members, offers annual memberships at the ridiculously low price of \$5 for individuals, \$10 for families, and \$25 for businesses — a great yet affordable way to become involved in your local community. Gift memberships can be a wonderful way to welcome your new neighbors, demonstrate pride in your community, or show that you remember an old friend. Membership fees support our Façade Grant, seasonal programs, and other initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> See the National Council on Public History website, at <http://ncph.org/cms/what-is-public-history/>.

# The Death of Commodore Perry Steinmetz, August 2, 1894

The fascinating *Lebanon Daily News* account below describes the circumstances surrounding a fatal heart attack suffered by Commodore Perry Steinmetz, a prominent Annville citizen. The Steinmetz family is mentioned in the 1895 history of Annville by Philip Croll (available at [www.fooa.org](http://www.fooa.org) under Resources/Annville History). Croll writes:

*“About the oldest landmark of historic account is the old Ulrich homestead to the northeast of town, almost opposite the Reading railroad depot. The place is now the home of Mrs. Commodore P. Steinmetz's family, suddenly bereft of father and husband not long ago. Here early in the last century the first Ulrich immigrant settled, the great-grandfather of Mrs. Steinmetz, and in 1751 he built a stone house, part of which is still standing.”*



The newspaper account below is transcribed from the original. Note the familiar names of many historic Annville persons, and the location of Evergreen Cemetery, directly behind St. Mark Lutheran Church. The Steinmetz home is now the Facilities Services office of LVC.

## SUDDENLY DROPPED DEAD

Paralysis of The Heart The Cause of Death.

**COMMODORE PERRY STEINMETZ**

**A Well-Known Esteemed Citizen of North Annville Township Suddenly Expired this Morning – He and a Friend Were Visiting the Cemetery.**

Commodore Perry Steinmetz, a well-known farmer residing immediately north of Annville, died suddenly this morning, shortly before 9 o'clock, of paralysis of the heart, while in the Evergreen Cemetery, at that place. He was aged 68 years.

The deceased and W.S. Seabold were trustees of the cemetery, and this morning they visited it with a view of having the weeds removed and the cemetery cleaned. An effort was made but the ground was found too hard and dry and they then decided to have the weeds mowed tomorrow by John Lightner, who has charge of the cemetery, and who was also present.

After reaching this decision, the deceased said, “while I am here I might as well visit my block.” He went out to the place designated alone and was seen to leave there and walk to the block of John D. Beaver, when his companion saw him fall to the earth. He hurried to his side but upon reaching him the discovery was made that life was extinct.

The alarm was given at once, and Dr. E. B. Marshall called, who pronounced death due to paralysis of the heart. His remains were placed on a board and carried to a wagon and conveyed to his home a short distance away.

The deceased had not felt well when he left home this morning and had called upon Dr. Marshall for treatment and his wife tried to persuade him not to go. He had a premonition of death, as he informed a friend “that a screech owl had screeched all night so that he had to close the window, which was a bad omen.”

The deceased took a prominent part in the Democratic party of this county, represented it in State Conventions, was President of the County Convention, a frequent delegate from North Annville township, a member of the County Committee and a candidate for the State Legislature and other offices of honor and trust.

He took an active part in the agricultural societies of this county in former years, took a pride in raising blooded cattle, which he exhibited at all county fairs. He was liberal and progressive and interested in all that tended to advance agriculture.

The deceased received a common school education and kept himself well informed on the progress of events as they related to agriculture, educational and political movements.

The deceased leaves to survive a widow, one daughter, Mary C. Steinmetz, and four sons, Robert, Adam, George, and John Steinmetz all of whom reside at home.



## ***A LANDMARK REDUX: Fred Richter & Paul Fullmer's Captivating New Children's Book Still Features the Best of Annville History!***

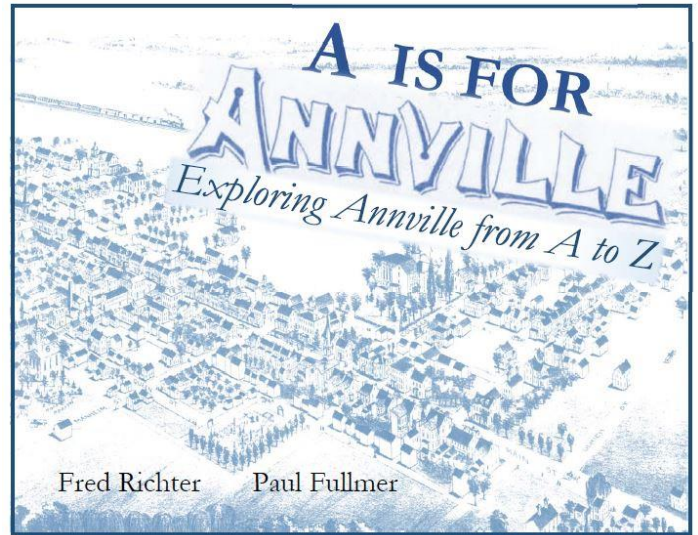
We regret that our last issue of *The Landmark* arrived in your mailboxes too late for you to order a copy of Fred Richter and Paul Fullmer's *A is for Annville: Exploring Annville from A to Z* (2017) for your loved ones for the holiday season just passed. The good news is that many holidays & birthdays lie just ahead, and this new and captivating pictorial history designed just for children and families is still available for purchase!

*A is for Annville* engages children in the history of a historic Pennsylvania community through the creative display of hundreds of photographs. Brief texts on each page provide additional information for children and adults alike. "Continuing the Conversation" adds discussion questions throughout the book to stimulate further inquiry.

As young book lovers and their parents, grandparents, or older friends explore the pictures together, their relationships grow, as does their knowledge of Annville's distant - and not-so-distant - past. And our lives in the community are enriched.

Copies may be ordered for \$18 (which includes sales tax) using the form below. Books may be picked up at 102 Locust Street in Annville free of charge. Books will be mailed for \$5 per order, or will be delivered for \$2 per order if the address is within five miles of Annville Township.

80 pages. Softcover. Color. Proceeds will go to the Friends of Old Annville's Façade Grant Program and other community initiatives.



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### **ORDER FORM: *A is for Annville: Annville from A to Z***

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ copy/copies of *A is for Annville*.

I've enclosed \$18 per copy and an additional  \$0  \$2  \$5 for shipping.

Checks, made payable to "The Friends of Old Annville," may be mailed to  
102 Locust Street, Annville, PA 17003.

## WORK AND LEARNING (Katie Loy)

Here we publish our final installment of the poem “Work and Learning” from *Porches: An Introduction to the Citizens of Annville*, published in 1985 by Phil Billings, with sketches by Dan Massad.

Here Katie talks about farm life and hard work, the joys of family reunions and shared labor and food, cold feet, and lessons learned.

Phil Billings writes:



### Part III.

The first farm I remember  
was the one out here on the Pike, 422,  
across from where Nichols is now.

The barn they're still using as part of that lumber yard, but the house they tore away.  
Well, I didn't know anything else but work on that farm.

As soon as you could carry a basket my mother had you out collecting eggs and cobs. For  
kindling.

Oh no, you didn't waste a thing.

Then when you got a little older you had to mind the cows.

That was an ordeal, let me tell you, not having no fences.

The reunions at Uncle Sim's —

they were the one time of year you really had fun.

He had 12 kids, then Uncle Dave's family, Uncle Bill's, ours, all the others. My dad was one of 13, 12 lived.

There was more than a hundred of us easy.

Do your chores fast,

get there in the buggy as early as you could.

All the men would just sit in the shade and reminisce.

Of course the women had to work hard, but they enjoyed it too, all the aunts pitched in.

Dish pans of food! They'd been making it all week- pepper cabbage, redbeet eggs, and so much  
chicken, ham, of course pies and cakes.

No one minded the kids all day,

we could play on haymounds, in the pasture, the stream, the barn, anything we could get into trouble.

The first thing I remember on that farm is being so cold when you woke up.

You only had your chaff bag under you and your feather tick.

Dad and Mom would be down in the kitchen starting the stove, and when they called you to come get  
dressed you didn't have no bedroom slippers you just kept running.

And in the fall, going out early to get the cows after they'd been let out all night — *that* wasn't too  
pleasant, let me tell you, in your bare feet.

The pasture grass was so wet and cold!

When you would get one of them up after awhile

you'd quick jump

onto where it had been laying.

Oh my yes, you learned all kinds of things.



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## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Please note 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. Questions? Call Rachel at (717) 867-2137.

Individual & Student \$ 5.00    Family (2+ persons) \$ 10.00    Business \$ 25.00    Friend of FOOA \$ 50.00 ★  
Benefactor \$ 100.00 \$    Founder ..... \$ 250 ❖

### **RENEWALS**

Michael & Barbara Arnold  
M/M Larry Aungst ★  
M/M Alfred P. Bernardo  
Ken & Betty Blauch  
M/M Leroy Brandt  
M/M K. Kenneth Brown II  
Mrs. Jeanne Dabich  
Paul & Betty Dunkelberger  
Gary & Bridget Grieve-Carlson

Dr. Frederick Johnson  
Brian & Tina Keck  
Elma Jean Kreider  
Mrs. Barbara Laudermilch  
Drs. Mark & Danielle Leshner  
Elizabeth Lingle ★  
M/M Albert Moser, Sr.  
M/M Ralph F. Munz  
Elton & Judith Kindt Palm  
Ms Ruthmary V. Pearce

Doug & Bonita Royer  
Dan & Donna Salerno  
Ms. Stasi Schaeffer  
Glenda Synodinos ★  
Mr. Edgar Teahl, Jr.  
Dr/M Allan Wolfe

### **NEW MEMBERS**

M/M Dave & Kim Laudermilch  
Larry & Bonnie Loser, Jr.