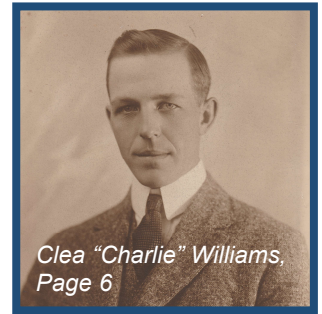




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Clea "Charlie" Williams,
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Hours: Saturdays 10:00 am – 2:00 pm,
 or by appointment

THE HARBOR VIEW

A quarterly publication of the Harborcreek Historical Society



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Harborcreek Historical Society Fall 2021 Speaker Series



The History of Presque Isle

Tuesday, September 14th at 6:00 pm

Follow the development of the Peninsula from the Ice Age to the recent engineering that has occurred. Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the park.

Unseen History: Underwater Archaeological Resources in Lake Erie

Tuesday, September 28th at 6:00 pm

Jeanette Schnars, Executive Director of the Regional Science Consortium, presents the history of shipwrecks off Erie County's shores and the ongoing work of the Pennsylvania Archaeological Shipwreck Survey Team to document these important underwater resources.

The Galbraiths' Harborcreek Haven: From West Sixth Street to Six Mile Creek, Victorian Life

Tuesday, October 12th at 6:00 pm

Harborcreek native Richard Cowell presents the lineages of Davenport and Winifred Galbraith and the history of the Galbraith's Harborcreek cottage and Winifred's building of the Tudor style home in its place. Other topics to be covered include Winifred's travels in Europe and Asia, the prohibition era, and Natalie Hart's sale of the property to Tommy Cowell.

Mission of the Lake Erie Region Conservancy: Lands and waters conserved in Pennsylvania's Lake Erie watershed

Tuesday, October 26th at 6:00 pm

David Skellie, Board President of LERC, presents the successes of our land trust since its incorporation in 2000. Since that date, LERC has preserved or played a major role in the conservation of 25 properties including the Shannon Road Conservation Area in Harborcreek Township.



Go green and request an e-newsletter!

If you would like to request to receive newsletters electronically, send a current email address to harborcreekhistory@gmail.com.

Print copies of the newsletter are available in black and white only, while the digital version is in full color.

Board of Directors

Melinda Meyer, Interim President
 John Skuce, Treasurer
 Jane Ingold, Secretary
 Nancy Brown
 Vickie Gilchrist
 Louise Smerick
 Brenda Weaver

At the Harborcreek Municipal Building, 5601 Buffalo Road

www.harborcreekhistory.org

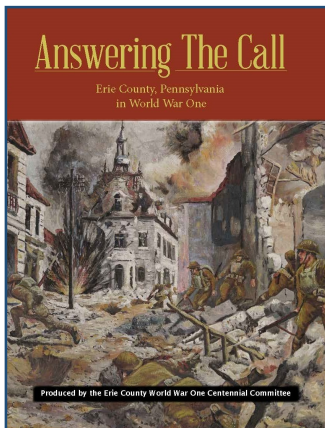
Gifts to the Society

John and Judy Skuce

In memory of Carlene Stroup

The Society began the Memorial Gifts program a decade ago, and many members have given to the organization in recognition of a loved one, a classmate or a family celebration. We invite you to consider making a donation "In Memory," "In Honor," or "On the Occasion" of a person or event that is important to you.

Society's 2021 Annual Meeting held August 14th



The Harborcreek Historical Society's 2021 annual meeting was held Saturday, August 14th 10 am – 12 pm at the Harborcreek Township Building. The event included a presentation by guest speakers Mary Jane Koenig and Jane Ingold, as well as a review of the Society's accomplishments over the last two years.

Mary Jane is a member of the Erie County, Pennsylvania, World War One Centennial Committee who recently published the book *Answering the Call: Erie County, Pennsylvania in World War One*. She and Jane are both contributing authors to the 175-page commemorative book, which includes biographies for the 201 men connected to Erie County who died in the war and chapters about local regiments, Erie County manufacturers' contributions to the war effort, the local chapter of the Red Cross, the 1918 flu pandemic, a visit by a German U-boat to Erie after the war, a list of over 2,300 men and women from Erie County who served in the military during the war, and more.

If you would like more information about the book, or to purchase a copy, email eriecountyww1@gmail.com.

In addition to reviewing key activities and the financials for the Society for the 2019 and 2020 calendar years, the membership voted to adopt the revised bylaws, which were proposed last year. The Society is appreciative of all who attended and actively participated in the meeting.

CORRECTION: *The last issue of the newsletter incorrectly reported that the 2020 annual meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 public health crisis. While all the Society's other activities were cancelled for 2020, the organization was able to hold the annual meeting in January prior to the mandatory shutdown. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.*

Thank you for your Erie Gives donations!

We are so deeply appreciative of the 32 donors who gave to the Harborcreek Historical Society during the Erie Community Foundation's 2021 Erie Gives online giving event. On August 10th, just over \$7 million was gifted by 10,752 donors to 438 nonprofits in Erie County. Two thousand and forty-nine dollars (\$2,049) was gifted to the Society, which will support operations and special projects.



Artwork raffle to benefit Society

The Harborcreek Historical Society is raffling off a framed, signed print of "The Iron Steamer," U.S.S. Wolverine leaving Presque Isle Bay 1876, by David W. Bennett. The artwork was generously gifted by Richard Gacka to raffle as a fundraiser benefiting the Society. It is 35" W x 28.5" H and numbered 23 of 480 prints produced in 1992. Tickets are \$5 each or \$10 for three. The winning ticket will be drawn Saturday, December 18, 2021. Tickets may be purchased at the Gifford-Blanchfield House during open hours or the Harborcreek Township office. For additional information, please call or email.



Thank you for coming out and eating ice cream!

By Louise Smerick

Thank you to the 100+ people who came out this summer to enjoy Penn State Berkey Creamery ice cream from Smiley's Ice Cream Truck. The truck served patrons from the parking lot of the Gifford-Blanchfield House Wednesdays 4:30-7:00 pm June 23, July 14, and August 11. We enjoyed the chance to catch up with members and meet new friends from the Harborcreek community.

Changes to the Board of Directors

There have been several changes to the Society's Board of Directors this year. Past president Lori Sheridan stepped off the board in December 2020, and long-time directors Tracy Longnecker Moore and Bill Rodland resigned from the board in 2021. Tracy joined the board in 2012, and, during her nine years as a director, she helped manage the Society's Facebook page and created the Society's souvenir notecards and bookmark (with an image of the Fiddle Inn). Bill began his six-year stint as a director in 2015. He managed memberships and helped with ongoing maintenance activities at the Gifford-Blanchfield House. We greatly appreciate the significant contributions these directors have made to the Society and wish them well in all of their future endeavors.



It is exciting to share that we have started filling vacancies and would like to welcome new director Vickie Gilchrist to the board. Vickie grew up in Harborcreek, graduating from HCHS in 1999. She attended Gannon University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Social Work. She has worked at Brevillier Village for 18 years, serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for 12 of those years. Vickie is currently the Director of Home Care and the Social Worker for Barnabas Court South. She also serves on the board of the Independent Council on Aging of Erie and the Pastoral Council at Our Lady of Mercy Church. She is married to Larry Gilchrist, and they have two children, Levi (7) and Rosalie (3), who keep them very busy! She also has three stepdaughters, Lexi, Libby, and Katy, who are all in college. In her free time, Vickie enjoys spending time with her friends and family, traveling, and visiting local wineries and restaurants.

Summer volunteer researches Harborcreek in the news

North East resident Sara Bengar spent time this summer volunteering for the Harborcreek Historical Society. She used the Erie County Public Library's subscription to NewsBank to access digital copies of Erie's historic newspapers and search for news articles about Harborcreek people, places, and events. Her findings will be added to the vertical files in the Society's library and archives and serve as a resource for researchers. Sara graduated from Mercyhurst University in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in History. She is attending Shippensburg University in the fall and will be pursuing a master's degree in Public History. Sara is also a member of the North East Historical Society. We are appreciative of Sara's assistance and wish her well with her studies!



Office Hours

Saturdays 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

The office is also open by appointment. Please call or email to schedule an appointment with our volunteers. Research inquiries are accepted by mail or email.

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The William Saltsman we never knew By Beth Simmons

Saltsman Road is named for the Saltsman family. William Saltsman, the founder of the Saltsman family in Harborcreek, came with Thomas Rees as a surveyor in 1796 and took up property called tract #238 northeast of Rees' estate. (1) He erected a sawmill along Four Mile Creek at Wintergreen Gorge in 1815, near where Cooper Road levels out at the bridge. (2) Later, he added a grist mill.

Recently, I uncovered a description of William Saltsman that John Adlum, one of the original government surveyors sent to Erie County, told in 1794, when he was working along the NY/PA line in what is today Warren County. While waiting for permission to survey at Fort Franklin, Adlum hired a "young" fellow from Pittsburgh named Saltsman as a surveyor's assistant. Adlum, who was known for his accurate descriptions, wrote in his memoirs, and which I have condensed:

*I had a **young** man in my employment, who had been a prisoner to the Indians in the last war NAMED **SALTSMAN** - and who could speak the Indian tongue tolerably well, and John Deckart could speak some English, And as Deckart was invited to Buffaloe to be made a chief of, and his mother who was one of the great women had gone with other great women and chiefs to Buffaloe - As his J. D.s mother was averse to giving permission to go to war, I told, J. D. that if war began and that if he would be faithful to us, I would get him a Capt's. Commission, and that he should have pay and rations while he was in our service, And I gave him a horse that cost between thirty and forty dollars, a saddle and bridle, also a new suit of clothes and hat, **And he agreed to take Saltsman with him, And I was obliged to furnish Saltsman with a horse that cost me sixty dollars with a saddle and bridle, and to pay him six shillings per day (80 cents) while he was on that business and, if any accident happened to him to prevent his return, I was to give his mother a poor widow one hundred dollars - I gave Saltsman a letter to Col. Pickering to cover appearances, if he should be stopped by some busy body - And Deckhart was to communicate everything that passed in Council against us, and if they determined on War, Deckhart was to contrive to have him (Saltsman) sent to notify Col. Pickering of it. ... Deckhart & Saltsman arrived at Buffaloe two or three days after they [the] Indians had commenced their business the women were obstinate and refused their consent to go to war, there was also a number of their old men averse to it - which kept them several days, debating the Subject.... I gave John Deckhart a horse and accoutrements, with a dress I gave him cost me altogether about sixty dollars - I gave to Saltsman whom I sent as a spy on***

(Continued on Page 5)

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*Businesses which have been a Society sponsor for ten years or more.

The William Saltsman we never knew *(Continued from Page 4)*

the Indians at Buffaloe Creek - though ostensibly he was my messenger to Col. Pickering, and I had written a letter to the Col. to make him appear as such, if any busy body had or should attempt to stop or interfere with him - But he would [not] undertake the journey until I gave him a horse, saddle and bridle which cost sixty dollars, and I had to advance him money to bear his expenses, and to allow him six shillings Pennsa. currency (80 cents) per day until he should arrive at my fathers at Muncy in Pennsa. - If he ever reached it, and if any accident happened to him to prevent his returning I was to give his mother, (who was a widow,) one hundred dollars. ...All this information was brought to me from Buffaloe Creek by Saltsman, above mentioned, after my arrival at my Fathers at Muncy Lycoming County in Pennsa.” (3)

The editors of Adlum’s memoirs, famous Pennsylvania historians Donald Kent and Merle H. Deardorff, identified Saltsman as the Harborcreek settler, **“William Saltsman (1777-1829),one of Thomas Rees's men who had surveyed in the Erie Triangle in the spring of 1794 (4); Adlum had hired him in Pittsburgh. In 1800, he (Saltsman) settled in Erie Co. near Wesleyville where he had a sawmill and later a gristmill. Benjamin Whitman and N. W. Russell, History of Erie County, Pennsylvania (Chicago, 1884), pages 945-946.” (5)**

A search through Ancestry.com files reveal that our William would have been the only possible William Saltsman available at the time. His father, Anthony, a sergeant in Captain Thomas Wilson's Company in the fourth Battalion of Northumberland County Militia from August 1777 until January 1778, was killed by Native Americans near a garrison on the south side of the West Branch of the Susquehanna commanded by Colonel Cookson Long. This fact is verified by orphan’s court records, in which the four Saltsman children received benefits until they turned 14. William’s mother, Rosanna Wilson Saltsman Richey, received benefits for a year until she married Robert Richey, another soldier, and then had another six children. So, she was not a widow, as Adlum described. (6) Our William was less than three months old when his father was killed. The history of the Saltsman family in Erie County history books tells the story of how Anthony was wearing a new pair of boots which did not provide enough traction to escape the Indians on the ice in the river. (7) Interestingly, the orphan’s case was heard in 1796, with John Adlum as one of the judges!

Our William’s grandfather, Wilhelm Saltzman settled in Cecil Township, Washington County, southeast of Pittsburgh by 1785, when he and his oldest son appear on the tax records. (8) His son, William Saltsman, Jr., (our William’s uncle), was too old to have been the “young” Saltsman Adlum described. There were other William Saltsmans in New York State also, but again, not of the right age to be “young” Saltsman.

So, after being held captive by unidentified Native Americans as a teenager, long enough to learn the language, William must have escaped or been released, and then he returned to his grandfather’s farm in Washington County (near Pittsburgh) where Adlum hired the seventeen-year-old. In fall 1794, Adlum obviously sent our William as a spy to the September/October Council at Buffalo. There the Native Americans learned of Anthony Wayne’s victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which caused them to alter their plans to fight for lands in New York and Pennsylvania. Saltsman apparently reported all of this to Adlum at Joseph Adlum’s home in Muncy, Pennsylvania on his way back from Buffalo. He may have stopped in the Nittany Valley where his mother and her husband, Robert Richey, had settled. (9)

In 1796, Rees hired Saltsman, Amasa Prindle, and Andrew Elliott as surveyors’ assistants. All located on land in Erie County in 1796 and are recorded as the first settlers of Harborcreek Township. This fascinating tale has been left out of the Saltsman family history. The Saltsman biographies printed in the histories of Erie County, which were written more than 80 years after-the-fact, never mentioned Saltsman’s surveying background, which perhaps explains why Rees hired Saltsman as an assistant in 1796. William Saltsman had one of the best surveyors in the country as a teacher!

(1) Cheney, Richard, 1976, *Wesleyville, 1795-1976*: Bureau of Wesleyville Bicentennial publication, p. 241; Simmons, Beth, https://sites.rootsweb.com/~paerie/famhist/ReesVPart4.htm#_edn66 There is no Tract #238! The original tract number and name, surveyed June 19, 1794, was #23 “Sonerk” warranted to Alexander Boyd, undoubtedly a fictitious name. After the survey was completed, tract numbers and many boundary lines were changed. The 1855 map shows the Saltsman house on Tract # 244; 1865 township map also shows the Saltsman farm was on Tract #244 (which is also the number for Rees’ tract which should be #234 according to the 1876

(Continued on Page 6)

The William Saltsman we never knew *(Continued from Page 5)*

map), but the boundaries had been changed; in 1876, without moving, Jesse Saltsman is shown in section #243.

(2) Bates, Samuel, 1884, History of Erie County, Pennsylvania, p. 264.

(3) John Adlum on the Allegheny: Memoirs for the Year 1794, Part II, by Donald H. Kent and Merle H. Deardorff, Pennsylvania magazine of History and Biography, October 1960, p. 435-480.

(4) Simmons, Beth, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~paerie/famhist/ReesVPart1.htm>

(5) Adlum Memoirs, p. 465.

(6) Orphans Court certificate of Rosanna [Wilson, Saltzman] Ritchie and family. 1796, Revolutionary War Pension file and related accounts. Pennsylvania State Archives, record group 4, 1785-1809: Orphans Court petition for children of Anthony Saltsman (1745-1778) (accessed from Ancestry.com)

(7) Bates, Samuel, 1885, History of Erie County, Pennsylvania, under City of Erie, not Harbor Creek, p. 945-946; repeated in Nelson, John, 1896, Nelson's Biographical Dictionary of Erie County, Pennsylvania, p. 563; Miller, John, 1906, A twentieth century history of Erie County, Pennsylvania, William S. Brown, p. 13; the story there has Elizabeth Saltsman's grandfather, Anthony Saltsman, killed by the Indians.

(8) Warrant Applications, 1733-1952. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Archives. Land Warrants. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.: Pennsylvania, U.S., Tax and Exoneration, 1768-1801 (accessed from Ancestry.com).

(9) Warrant Applications, 1733-1952. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Archives. Land Warrants. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.: Pennsylvania, U.S., Land Warrants and Applications, 1733-1952 (accessed from Ancestry.com).

Clea "Charlie" Dalton Williams Family By Cam Stadtmueller

The Society is always grateful for the chance to grow the archival collection. In July, Bill Williams came to us with family photographs and information, plus a mystery for YOU to solve. Do you know the location of the following road(s)? Bill has copies of his father's obituary from two different Erie newspapers. One states that his father Charlie lived on Milner Road, and the other lists Charlie as living on Miner Road, both in Harborcreek Township. Can you solve this mystery? We welcome your answers either by mail or email at harborcreekhistory@gmail.com



Back row from left to right: Nellie, Charlie, Bud, and Betty Jane. Three small children in front, from left to right: Robert, Bonnie, and Bill (on the pony).

Clea Dalton Williams, who was better known as Charlie, was born in New Haven, OH and married Nellie Lyon of Perry, Indiana. According to the 1930 U.S. Census, the couple moved to Greenfield Township in the 1920s and brought with them their children Betty Jane (age 8), Sherman Gale (age 5), and Bonnie (age 2). A non-family member was listed as a lodger/ farm laborer; he was John Smith from Poland. While in Greenfield Township, two more sons were born to the couple: Robert and Bill.

Bill does not know when his father moved the family to Harborcreek Township. At the time of his father's death from scarlet fever on March 8, 1941, Bill was around five years of age. Nellie moved the family to 858 Rankine Avenue in Lawrence Park Township. She remarried a Smith who ran a coal yard in North East.

Bill attended Lawrence Park schools until 1953, when his mother and stepfather bought the Sleepy Hollow Motel on Buffalo Road between Cook and Knoll Avenues. Bill graduated from Harbor Creek High School in the Class of 1954.

The family history Bill shared included information about his brother, Sherman "Bud" Gale Williams. At age 19, Bud was drafted into World War II. He served on domestic soil from January 1943 to August 1944 and overseas from August 1944 to January 1946. A compensation document accompanying Bud's service records lists his pay for 19 months of domestic service as \$190 and foreign service as \$255. After the war Bud married Jean Cass, daughter of Elsworth Cass, who was a farmer and kept a barbershop in his Depot Road home. Bud and Jean lived in the former Lowery one-room schoolhouse at the corner of Belle and Davison Roads. When Bud died at age 39, he was living with his second wife Evelyn Morris Williams in Cochranon near Meadville.

Bill himself enlisted in the service in 1960. While serving for eight years and eight months, he completed a tour in Vietnam from 1964-65. Bill came back to Harborcreek Township and presently lives on Clark Road.

Information on Bill and his brother Bud will be added to the Society's Military Veterans Book. If you are a veteran from Harborcreek, or you know one, please consider contributing to this book, which grows every year.