A few Witte comments…

Who is a veteran? While a veteran is usually described as one who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, I’d like to pose a question for your consideration: Should a civilian held as a prisoner of war be honored as a veteran?

During a recent conversation with Society member Elaine Fillman, we talked about her uncle Roy Brooke, a now-deceased Limerick Township resident, who was held for three-years as a POW during World War II. What surprised me about Mr. Brooke’s heroism was the omission of his name from the veterans’ monument at the Limerick Township Building Veteran’s Park. Why was his name missing? Quite simply, Elaine explained, “He was a civilian!”

Continued on page 2)

Great Christmas Gifts Suggestions

Limited First Edition Redwood Plate by Greg Shooner

Completed in the Jacob Medinger style, this plate has a center design representing the Schuylkill River and our numerous local creeks. The wheat sheaves depict our farming heritage. This was originally sold as part of a fund raising project and returned to us. Price: $53.00

Additionally, Christmas Ornaments are available for $10.60, and the history book & Index is priced at $26.50. All prices include tax.
A few Witte comments...(continued from page 1)

Born in Fagleysville on October 20, 1893, Walter Leroy Brooke was the eldest child of Hannah Malinda Bertolet (a descendant of Abraham Bertolet) and Robert D. Brooke. According to the U.S. Federal Census of 1900, Walter, his parents and sisters resided on their family farm in Limerick Township. On 4 Feb 1918, while a chemistry student at Penn State College, Walter enlisted in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged on 18 Dec 1918. Following graduation, he resided in the Halifax (Dauphin County) home of his aunt Alice Bressler with his first wife Caroline Shoop Brooke and worked in State College as a chemist and college instructor. Sometime prior to 1930, he became a chemist for Proctor and Gamble and traveled to SE Asia. A ship’s manifest from 29 Apr 1930 shows that he traveled from Yokohama, Japan to San Francisco, CA, apparently returning from a business trip that was just prior to his second marriage.

On 29 June 1930 in Valparaiso, IN, he married his second wife Bertha Beard, a medical missionary nurse from Napa, CA. Walter’s job as a chemist for Proctor & Gamble Company’s Philippine Island division required a move to that Island nation, where he worked on the development of Star Margarine. This product combined animal fats with hardened and unhardened vegetable oils that required no refrigeration. So, before the advent of electricity in most parts of the Philippines, Star Margarine was an important food staple. While living in the Philippines, their daughter Bertolet Brooke was born in 1933, and their son Robert Brooke was born in 1937.

Before the Japanese takeover of the Philippines, which occurred in December 1941, Mr. Brooke sent his family back to the USA to live with his mother in Limerick Township, PA. After his family’s departure, Walter Brooke and other American civilians living and working in the Philippines were captured, interred in a Japanese concentration camp, and held as prisoners of war for three years. On April 10, 1945, 51-year old Walter Brooke, the former POW, boarded the S. S. Admiral E.W. Eberle and sailed from Manila Harbor to the Port of San Pedro, CA to rejoin his family. Following the war, Walter Leroy Brooke continued to work for Proctor and Gamble in the Philippines. He retired in Napa, CA, where he died in 1972 at age 79.

Leroy Brook is listed on the Service Roll on the Great War Monument located at Limerick Church Burial Ground, in front of the New Apostolic Church. The text of this monument is as follows:

This tablet is dedicated to the citizens of Limerick and Lower Pottsgrove Townships
To those of their number who rendered their Services in defense of humanity in the great
War of the nations 1914 - 1918
And in memory of those who gave their last full measure of devotion

Walter Leroy Brooke and other POWs deserve our respect and, perhaps, should be considered as WW II veterans.

Martin Witte, LTHS President

Remember, you can contact us via email at: historian@LimerickPaHistory.org
or access our webpage at: http://www.limerickpahistory.org
A Bit of History

Limerick Township A Journey Through Time 1699 - 1987

By Muriel Lichtenwalner

Order of the Knights of Friendship

1900 - Order of Knights of Friendship: The Knights of Friendship met in a two-story brick building on the site now (1987) occupied by the Limerick Fire house. The lodge probably was organized in the early 1900s, perhaps after the Knights of the Golden Eagle moved from Limerick to Linfield about 1880. The O K F lodge met regularly, played card games, and offered financial help to those who were up against it. The members sponsored a band and also a baseball team. The building was sold to the Limerick Chapel, along with the Limerick Square Hotel, in April 1944 (Page 362).

1921 - Limerick Fire Company: Thirty-one residents of the village of Limerick met on August 15, 1921 in the lodge rooms of the Order of the Knights of Friendship to discuss the need for organized fire protection in the community. Before the evening was over, a fire company had come into existence (Page 347).

1957- Limerick Chapel: With attendance topping 1,300, expansion occurred in 1957 and 1963. The two story building west of the main church building, acquired in 1957 from the Limerick Chamber #88, Order of Knights of Friendship, was renovated and for use as a Junior High department (Page 90).

While the Order of the Knights of Friendship disbanded in 1956, some of their records are available in the Historic Society’s Library.

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The Herstine Chapel

For the first time in years, the chapel bell sounded over the Village of Neiffer. On September 11, 2016, a congregation from Skippack led by Pastor Charlie Graff held their first service at the Herstine Chapel. Within this growing congregation, a Sunday school and nursery have been combined with the services. All are welcome to attend Sunday school at 9:30 A.M. and church services at 10:30 A.M.

We welcome Pastor Graff and the congregation to the community.

Carol Sing at The Herstine Chapel

Please join members of the Limerick Township Historical Society at the Herstine Chapel for our annual Family Christmas Carol Sing on Saturday, December 3rd at 7:00 P.M. While we have heat and candlelight, remember to bring a flashlight! Light refreshments will be served. Herstine Chapel is located at Neiffer and Bragg Roads.

For more information, please contact Bunny Dempsey at 610-287-9230.
Museum/Library Donations
We offer a special ‘thank you’ to all our donors...

| **Ruth Borneman** | • Documents from the Limerick Lions organized in April 1955  
|                   | • Records and information from Limerick Lions activities  
|                   | • “*The Preachers Appeal of 1775*” by William T. Parsons.  
|                   |   ○ Written by the eminent PA German historian Dr. William Parsons, former Professor of History and PA German Studies at Ursinus College in Collegeville, this pamphlet provides a detailed political and religious history of the German American experience during the American Revolution. Included within its 58-pages are numerous black and white illustrations with some commentary written in German. This work was published in 1975 by the 250th Communion Anniversary-Bicentennial Committee of Pennsylvania South East Conference, United Church of Christ, Collegeville, PA.  
|                   | • 4 old postcards with views from High Street and The Hill School in Pottstown.  
|                   | • Township newsletters from The Spring-Ford Link (Winter 2007)  
|                   | • Limerick Historical Society Newsletter (May 1994)  
|                   | • Limerick Township 275th Anniversary Celebration booklet  
|                   | • “*Upper Hanover Township: Celebrating 275 Years of History 1741 – 2016*”.  
|                   |   ○ Recently published by the Upper Hanover Township Historical Committee, this book contains a photograph of the Borneman Homestead.  
|                   | • 4 postcards from the local area; a calendar by *Suburban Reader’s Service* - Mary Goodhart; pencils and erasers from local businesses; 6 memorial folders of local residents. |

| **Robert Moses** | • *Moses Dairy* milk bottles:  
|                 |   ○ 1-pint and ½ pint bottles imprinted with: *R.H. Moses, Limerick, PA*  
|                 | • *Peter Lumber Company* plastic change purse |

| **Elaine Fillman** | • Approximately 40 books from St. James Union Sunday School (obtained from the auction when St. James Union and St. James Reformed Churches split).  
|                  | • Picture of a farming scene  
|                  | • Small brocade handbag used by Helen Brook |

| **John & Sue Perry** | • Large photographs of two children (unidentified) standing on Main Street in Linfield with the Joseph Kendall barn in the background  
|                    | • 3-pages of historical information about the early owners of the Perry house (owned by John and Sue Perry since 2001, but formerly owned by Walter and Edna Wlazelek). |

| **David Ziegler** | • Wedding photograph of his parents, Clarence & Esther (Souder) Ziegler, which was taken before 1941. Clarence served in the U.S. Army during WW II. |


| **William Wells** | • Sumneytown Anniversary Plate (sold to Bob Borneman) |

| **Martin Witte** | • Booklet: “*East Vincent Township – 175 Years – 1832 – 2007*”  
|                 | • Images of Old Upper Salford – 250 Anniversary by Phil Johnson Ruth |

| **Robert & Carol Robinson** | • Monetary donation. |

| **Rita Wanner** | • Monetary donation. |
A Special Note About Upcoming Meetings

Plans are moving forward to replace the current township municipal building with a new, larger building on the present site. If the work begins by January 2017, then Society members will be advised about an alternate meeting location or cancellation of the January and February meetings. Additionally, arrangements must be made by the Society to crate and move the large (5’ by 13’) painting of the early view of Lakeside Inn to a safe, climate-controlled location. Painted in 1952 by James R. Pierce, the large canvas depicting the Lakeside Inn was cleaned and restored in 2007 by Paul Gratz of Doylestown, PA. The Society paid for the restoration of the painting.

Birthdays

In August, Alice Dempsey celebrated her 102nd Birthday. Although Alice is a resident at Parkhouse in Royersford, she is able to participate in activities and enjoys having visitors. Alice is our oldest member and Kaya Hernandez is our youngest member (See photo at right).

On October 1st, William Carl Lightcap celebrated his 99th birthday. Mr. Lightcap, a veteran of World War II and a survivor of the Battle of the Bulge, resides in Pottstown with his wife. Happy birthday, William, and thank you for your service!
Upcoming Programs

December 12th: Our Annual Christmas Get-Together. Members are asked to bring cookies to share. Entertainment will be provided by the Sound Logic Quartet of the Sweet Adelines International.

January 9, 2017: Where are they now? Part II. Members will review previous programs and find out what the presenters are doing now.

February 13, 2017: Musical games: Song titles Society will note titles subject

March 13, 2017: Trails in Limerick Township and nearby sites. Limerick Township Parks and Recreation will provide pictures and info on the trail system in the township.

The Barlow School

Area residents are pleased to see that the Barlow School located on Lewis Road near Benner Road looks great. The grounds have been cleaned and cleared, the building has been painted, and the inside has been cleared of records and papers from a previous congregation. Cathy Calhoun, a jeweler in Royersford, underwrote the cost for this work. Hopefully, a new, small congregation will take over this historic one-room school building.

A Visit at the Village of Willow Run

On September 14, 2016, my daughter, Vicki Hernandez and I, had the opportunity of presenting a program to the residents of Willow Run and informing them about the Limerick Township Historical Society. Located on Ridge Pike between Limerick Center Road and Lewis Road, the Village of Willow Run was constructed in 1997 on farmland formerly owned by Soloman Renninger, the father of “Gabby” Renninger. Willow Run is an adult community that includes 148 homes, a clubhouse, and a recreation facility.

During our presentation, we discussed the acquisition of the Hunsberger House, the LTH Society’s current home, the work of the founding members, and highlights of happenings from the past 30+ years. Approximately 35 residents attended and had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation. It was a privilege to be invited to Willow Run and meet so many great people.

Eleanor Wellman