



Longswamp Township Historical Society *Newsletter*

October-November 2014

*Preserving and sharing the
historical past and culture of
Longswamp Township since 2010*

Purpose of the LTHS

To discover and preserve educational and illustrative collections of material, structures, and landmarks of the Longswamp Township area.

To maintain a museum and non-circulating historical library of the Longswamp Township area.

To preserve and record the history and culture of the Longswamp Township area.

LTHS Directors

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Vice President – Marie Maly
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Treasurer – Mike Radcliffe

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Eloise Long
Judith Murphy
Kevin Shoemaker
Christopher Stress
Ron Young

Betty Anton, Newsletter editor

If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a member, please contact us at (484) 504-9149

Email:

LongswampHistory@gmail.com

A Message from our President

Autumn has arrived after a beautiful summer in Longswamp.

With the changing of the seasons, the Board looks forward to the 2015 calendar, the Pa. Dutch dinner, the launching of the third Longswamp book: Mertztown, and last, but certainly not least, elections for the Board for next year.

Without our hard-working, energetic Board, none of the projects we sponsored in the last 4 years would have been possible. A lot of talent, time, and hard work are needed to accomplish our goals.

We look forward to continuing working on these goals but we need YOU to help. What can you do? Everything from sharing history, attending Board meetings (yes, they can be boring at times), helping out at our programs, giving us suggestions, and spreading the word that Longswamp rocks!

Mary Ann



Take a look in the following pages for our exciting calendar of programs and events for the rest of 2014 and into 2015!



Newspaper Tidbits From Past

TURKEYS SOON WILL BE SEEN ONLY IN THE ZOO

*Will be practically extinct in 10 Years,
according to the Census Bureau*

Washington, Dec. 23 --- Ten years from now a multi-millionaire may be able to have a duck or a goose on his Christmas table, but as for turkeys, the few that are left will all be in the zoo.

The Census Bureau today issued the worst "gloom" statement of all. According to its report, there were 6,594,695 turkeys on farms in the United States in 1900, and only 3,688,708 in 1910. At the rate of decrease indicated, the turkey will be a strange bird in 1920.

[The Reading Eagle, Reading, PA, Saturday,
December 23, 1911, page 1]

The death of an old woman in a hospital at Bethlehem who received fatal burns while smoking a pipe in bed brings to mind that pipe smoking among old women was formerly very common in the Pennsylvania German section, but has now almost entirely gone out of practice. So few old women smoke the pipe nowadays that they are talked about, whereas formerly the custom was almost universal. A gentleman, who remembers that when he was a boy, 40 or 50 years ago, practically all old women smoked, says they got into the habit through using a pipe as an antidote for toothache.

In those days dentists were scarce in this section and smoking was a general panacea both among men and women for aching teeth until they became so painful that they had to be extracted. Tooth pulling in those days was not done by dentists, because there were not any, but by the family physician, each of whom had a pair or two of forceps and yanked out molars whenever they had to be.

[The Reading Eagle, Reading, PA, Tuesday,
January 2, 1912, page 20]

Topton, Aug. 18. --- The East Penn Rural Telephone and Telegraph Company was organized at a meeting held at the American House. The following officers were elected: President, B. Frank Harpel, Topton; vice president, Walter Schwoyer, Bowers; secretary, Dr. C. D. Werley, Topton; treasurer, Rev. W. L. Meckstroth, Longswamp; agent, Dr. G. H. Pflueger, Topton; directors, Moses Kutz, Cosmus D. Lutz, Lyons; W. W. Frick, Bowers, L. S. Mabry, Longswamp, and A. N. Angstadt, Dryville.

The line will start at Longswamp and will pass through Mertztown, Hancock, Topton, Bowers, Dryville and New Jerusalem. The exchange will be located at this place and connection will be made with the Bell Telephone Company's line at Kutztown. Most of the stock has been subscribed for and application will shortly be made for a charter.

The line is expected to be built as soon as possible. The telephone rental has been fixed at \$12 per annum. Another meeting will be held Friday evening, Aug. 20.

[Topton news, The Allentown Democrat,
Allentown, PA, Thursday, August 19, 1909, page 2]

Upcoming LTHS Events

Save the dates, tell your friends and family members, and plan to join us. All of these events are free of charge (except dinner) and open to the public.



Wed., October 15: Photo Contest Entry Picture Show and 2015 Calendar Reveal

7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Longswamp Township Municipal Bldg, Lower Level

Remember when sharing your vacation photos was something that took place in your living room using 35mm slides and a projector? Take a trip back to those good old days as we share all of the entries to our 2nd Annual "Beautiful Longswamp Township" Calendar Photo Contest. Winning entries will be announced at the end of the show. Calendars and other items will be available for purchase. The popcorn and beverages are on us!

Sun., October 19th: 2nd Annual Pennsylvania Dutch Buffet

Janelle's Restaurant and Catering Hall, 360 Fleetwood Road, Bowers

Back by popular demand. Chicken pot pie, boova schenkel, pig stomach, potato filling w/ gravy, corn pie, schnitz un knepp, lettuce w/ hot bacon dressing, chow chow, pepper cabbage, shoofly pie, funny cake, and a choice of beverages. \$17 pp.

Doors open at 12:30 p.m.; program begins at 1:00; buffet begins at 1:30.

Buy your tickets at the Courtesy Desk at Radcliffe's (open 'til close daily until tickets are gone).

Tickets are going *fast*!

Sat., November 8: Longswamp UCC Bazaar

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Longswamp UCC Fellowship Hall, second floor

Stop by our table to say hello and pick up a few copies of the 2015 "Beautiful Longswamp Township" calendars for those hard-to-shop for people on your Christmas shopping list. Other items will also be available for purchase.

Friday, November 14 "The Pow-Wow Principle: Pennsylvania German Folk Healing."

7:00 p.m., Henry Auditorium at the Lutheran Home at Topton

Commonwealth Speaker and Curator of the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center,

Candace Kintzer Perry

A program that will explore the heritage of pow-wow or the practice of folk/faith healing that was common among Pennsylvania Germans in the 19th and 20th centuries. Journey back to the Old World origins of pow-wow. Learn how it evolved in Pennsylvania and quietly flourished, side by side with the culture's mainstream practices. From its beginnings in the 19th century, to the famous 20th century "Hex Murder" in York County, learn how pow-wow changed the ways in which Pennsylvania Germans were viewed. This presentation includes PowerPoint and handouts to engage audiences and is followed by a lively Q&A.

This presentation is a program of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council supported in part by National Endowment for the Humanities. The Pennsylvania Humanities Council, a nonprofit organization, inspires individuals to enjoy and share a life of learning.

PHC | Pennsylvania
Humanities
Council

December (TBD): Book Launch Party, "The Village of Mertztown" (and Annual Meeting)

7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Christian Congregation Church, 323 Chestnut Street, Mertztown

Watch for more information about what is shaping up to be our best holiday party yet!

(The first 15 minutes of the event will be dedicated to election of 2015 Historical Society officers and committee chairs.)

Wed., January 21: An “Antiques Roadshow.” Discover Longswamp Township’s Hidden Treasures

7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Longswamp Township Municipal Building

Join us for an evening of discovery as we showcase some of the items from our permanent collection. We’ll tell you what we know about our items, and maybe you can tell us a thing or two about them as well.

Fri., March 27: A Walk with Conrad Weiser

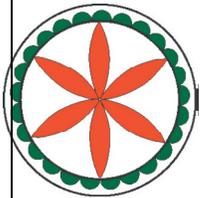
7:00 – 8:30 p.m., The Lutheran Home at Topton, Henry Auditorium

Take a trip back in time to Pennsylvania’s early days as Lynn Otto, a member of the Friends of the Conrad Weiser Homestead Board, talks about pioneer Conrad Weiser's travels on the Tulpehocken Trail while serving as an interpreter and negotiator for the Native Americans and the Provincial government.

Wed, April 22: The Barns of Longswamp Township

7:00 – 8:30 p.m., The Lutheran Home at Topton, Henry Auditorium

Longswamp Township is blessed with some of the best and truly unique examples of Pennsylvania barn architecture. Join us as Greg Huber of Eastern Barns Consultants shares his extensive knowledge of Eastern barns while taking us on a tour of many of the 103 barns he’s found and documented in Longswamp Township—almost all of which were built in the 19th century.



The Lower Macungie Township Historical Society celebrates its 25th anniversary!

Admission is free

Bring the whole family for an afternoon filled with exhibits, demonstrations, children’s activities, gifts, antique appraisals, food and much more.

October 12, 2014 from 1-4 p.m. at the Lower Macungie Township Community Center
3450 Brookside Rd, Macungie, PA 18062

Tom Hall Auctioneers will be offering antique appraisals at the celebration.

A ticket entitles you to have two items appraised. Tickets may be purchased on-line for \$8.00. Supply is limited! Visit: www.LMTHistory.org for more information

**Congratulations to BSA Eagle Scout Candidate
Weylin Eck**

Weylin led his team in the renovation of the WWII Memorial site at the Longswamp Union Cemetery. This cemetery is shared by Longswamp United Church of Christ and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and is located at the corner of Clay and State Roads in Mertztown. The Longswamp Township Historical Society salutes Weylin, his team, and his sponsors for creating such a beautiful new memorial honoring all veterans and military personnel from the township.

Longswamp Founding Fathers

This series highlights the life and accomplishments of the 26 men who signed a petition presented to the justices of Berks County in 1761 that requested Long Swamp be erected into a township.



Samuel Dormeyer (Dormire)

Samuel Dormeyer arrived in Philadelphia aboard the ship Phoenix on September 15, 1749, along with his cousins Michael and Jacob. Samuel was born before 1733 in the Alsace region of today's France. (This area once belonged to Germany.) Samuel married Anna Christina Boppenmeyer (Popemeyer) after arriving in America. He obtained naturalization in 1765, at which time he changed his surname to Dormire.

Samuel and Christina's first three children were most likely born in Long Swamp, although we found no confirming baptismal records. The next two children were born in Lehigh County and were baptized at the Little Lehigh Church. Based on this last bit of information, we can assume Samuel and Christina were of the Lutheran doctrine and chose to either make the long voyage to attend the only Lutheran church in the "long swamp" or else they left Longswamp Township around 1763 (the year their fourth child was born). Tax records for 1767 indicate Samuel paid taxes in Longswamp Township.

The missing baptismal records for the first three children could be similarly explained. Without a house of worship, the Lutheran congregation living in Long Swamp had no central place to store records of baptisms, marriages, etc. The Little Lehigh Church is today known as Zion Lehigh Evangelical Lutheran Church and is located in Lower Macungie Township, just outside of Alburtis.

Samuel and Christina purchased a 380-acre plantation in Rowan County, North Carolina, on September 14, 1767, and permanently left the area. They sold this land in 1774 and relocated to Lincoln County, North Carolina. Samuel also received a 200-acre land grant in neighboring Burke County, North Carolina, in 1778.

His death date is unknown but is thought to have been around 1782.

Our thanks to Emma Sue Tritt of Collierville, Tennessee, for sharing the research she's collected about the Dormeyer family. Her sources (and ours) are a combination of verifiable documented history and genealogy websites (Familymaker.com, Ancestry.com, FindaGrave.com). Emma emailed us a few months ago to learn if we had information about Samuel as one of his daughters married into the Tritt family. Emma has since joined our family of Historical Society members.

Contributed by Marie Maly



Looking for a Tombstone?

This is part of an ongoing series of articles written by Jerri Burket on researching history



If the family you're researching all live in the same general area, it's generally not difficult to locate the final resting place for all the relatives. But that task becomes more difficult when folks become scattered all over the state and the country and the world.

A good starting point for such research is Find-a-Grave (www.findagrave.com).

The website was originally created in 1995 to identify the burial locations of celebrities. It was later expanded to include the graves of folks who were not famous. It is now owned by Ancestry.com.

Only members may contribute information to the website, but membership is free. You don't, however, have to be a member to look at its information.

Once a person submits a listing for a particular person, s/he becomes the manager of the listing and is the only one who can edit it. Anyone else, however, can write to this person to suggest corrections or to donate additional information.

If your person of interest has been listed on the website, you might find all sorts of information.

- Dates of birth and death, which may be from the tombstone, but could be from other sources.
- Picture of the tombstone.
- Picture of the person.
- Images of documents that provide proof for the birth and death date.
- Hyperlink connections to listings for other deceased relatives ... parents, spouses, children and siblings.

You can search the listings by name (complete or partial), dates of birth or death, location, or by cemetery.

If you know the cemetery and your person of interest is not listed, or if they're listed but without a tombstone picture, you can request that someone who lives near the cemetery run over there and snap a photograph for you.

But a word of caution. Treat all the information you find on the website as a clue and not data. Even tombstones can be wrong. Always search for another, and completely different, source to prove the detail.



Standard Barns in Longswamp Township

This is a continuing series of articles about the barns of Longswamp Township by Greg Huber

Three categories of barns in Longswamp Township have been discussed in the last few articles in this newsletter. They include – stone barns, ground barns and Sweitzers. The first category is not actually a type or style of barn but concerns the usage of a particular material – stone. The second and third articles refer to those barn types seen in the titles themselves. In this article the Standard barn will be looked at with a special focus on the incidence of the three sub-types of this barn type in the township and certain features of each sub-type.

The Standard barn is by far the most prevalent type in the township. This follows the basic lead of what is found in all the townships in the eastern half of Berks County and the greater Lehigh and Saucon River Valleys areas out to the Delaware River. This condition is also seen in the northern halves of both Bucks and Montgomery Counties. All these areas likely represent approximately 5,000 to 7,000 Standard barns. For comparison sakes, this number is probably more than 8 to 10 times the number of Sweitzers in the entire state. We can plainly see that the construction of Standard barns in Longswamp Township was part of a great tradition in an extensive part of southeast Pennsylvania. No other barn type likely ever dominated the cultural landscape in any era as the Standard barn did in the 1810 to 1920 era.

Standard Barns in the Township

A total of 83 Standard barns have been surveyed since early 2012. The survey revealed the existence of 103 barns. The



survey was achieved by traveling up and down every road and lane in the entire township. Every barn type was recorded along with the materials used in their construction. Certainly, a few Standard barns were likely missed and may be counted in the township survey in the months and years to come. Far more certainly, many dozens of Standard barns have been lost in the area in the past number of decades. Perhaps a hundred years ago, more than 200 Standard barns dotted the landscape. They have fallen to ruin due to neglect, destroyed because of bad weather, were removed to make way for more modern barns or modern development eliminated their presence.

Typical Standard barn built circa 1850 on north side of Haas Road. This is a large sized stone to the eaves level barn with new wood siding at front fore-bay wall and metal siding in the upper gable area at the end wall

More Standard barns will be lost in the future. This points to the urgent need to record these structures before it is too late.

Standard barns were built of stone, frame and sometimes brick. Only very rarely were Standard barns log constructed. No Standard log built barns are present in Longswamp Township. In addition, no brick constructed barns of any type are known.

Township Standard barns consist of three categories – frame barns, stone to eave level barns and stone to peak barns. Each of these building types plus what are called remnant barns will be discussed in some detail. First, it is important to describe what constitutes a Standard barn.

Appearances of Standard Barns

Exterior of Barns

A Standard barn is a two-level banked fore-bay structure. This is a unique barn style in all of North America. Several two-level bank style barns exist on the continent, but the Standard barn must possess a fore-bay. Standard barns are similar to Sweitzers, but Standard barns have symmetrical roof silhouettes. That is, each roof slope at each barn side is of equal length. In a Standard barn, a fore-bay is created when the stable wall is recessed to the rear of the front corners of the barn by a few feet – 4 to 8 feet or sometimes more depending on the barn. This recessed condition makes the cantilevered aspect of the front upper wall or fore-bay of the barn. Normal range of the width of the fore-bay is quite narrow – only about 4 to 5 feet.

The great or even vast majority of Standard barns have stone foundation end walls. These walls are 7 to 8 feet high. On the house side end or near gable wall of the barn, one or occasionally two door entries are placed within several feet of the rear corner of the barn. In addition, one or sometimes two small sized barred windows are seen. At the opposite or far end wall, doors in area Standard barns are almost never seen. Two or three barred windows are included in the basement level wall.

End walls above the basement levels were constructed in Standard barns in the following way – stone to the roof peak (SP), stone to the eaves level (SEL) or were frame constructed. The SP barns quite often have wall openings either in the form of vertical slits or splayed loopholes (for ventilation) arranged in particular ways or they had louvered windows also arranged in certain ways. Occasionally, other wall openings may appear. SEL barns have these openings to a much less extent. Any stone barn built after about 1840 to 1850, very infrequently has these wall openings.

Stone to peak Standard barn built circa 1825 with two doors at basement level toward rear corner of barn. Note the vertical slits or splayed loopholes. Barn has circa 1900 straw shed at the front of stone section.



The rear walls of Standard barns, when stone constructed at their end walls, have stone from ground level to the tops of the walls at either side of the centered wagon doors. Wall openings, as mentioned above, also appear on the rear walls on barns built before 1840 to 1850. Original wagon doors that always swung outwardly are not often found on barns. Barns do retain their original doors more often when built after the Civil War. A few types of wagon doors were constructed – chief among them the more common batten type and also frame type. These types are not explained in detail here.

The fronts of Standard barns, it may be said, consist of two sections – the upper wall or façade of the fore-bay and the recessed stable wall. The upper wall is always frame-constructed that consists of vertical boards. Some Standard barns retain their original boards. In the middle area of the walls, in line with the interior wagon bays, are winnowing doors that are also sometimes original. These doors were left open when threshing or winnowing was done in the barn interior. In addition, other doors are sometimes seen on front walls. These doors may be a part of the front walls of granaries that were nearly always placed at the fronts of barns.

Sometimes, of course, certain barns have their front walls adorned with barn stars or hex signs of various types. Barn stars were likely first applied to barns in the township in the second quarter of the nineteenth century or perhaps even before this time. Many people regard these barn stars as interesting decorative touches to the barns.

At the basement level of barns, *peiler ecke* (pier corners) are often seen at the front corners. These are stone ell-formations that helped to reinforce the end walls of the barns. These formations continue up to the top of the eave walls in stone barns. In frame barns they only appear on the basement level. At the house sides of the barns are often cupboards at the pier corners with single height entry doors that are occasionally original. These cupboard areas stored items incidental to the care of horses. The *peiler ecke* at the opposite end of the barn was an open area, that is, no cupboards were built there.

In perhaps a few Standard barns, no *peiler ecke* are seen at the front corners. Instead the stone end walls of the basement level extend straight out and no ell formations were built. In one small frame barn on Weis Street, the stone wall was angled out to create greater support, but no actual ell-formation is present.

The stable walls, depending on the dimensions of the barns, have a variable number of doors. These doors are most often split – they have upper and lower halves. Often, the upper halves, especially in warm weather, were likely left open to ventilate the interior of the basements. A fair to good number of Standard barns have their original stable wall doors or at least some of them have survived. The doors have a number of construction details, too numerous to mention here. In addition, the stable walls often have two to four barred windows, again for ventilation and also to allow light into the barn interiors.

Interior of Barns

Roof Support Types

The interior of each Standard barn has a roof support structure that includes two major types as also seen in township Sweitzers. The most common type is referred to as a Common Rafter System. This is a series of basically same sized rafters arranged in pairs. They are most often pegged at their top ends and they over-sail the wall plates at their bottom ends. Most pre-Civil War era Standard barns have hewn or handmade rafters; but those barns built after about 1850 or 1860 often have milled rafters. The other major rafter type is called a Principal Rafter System. At least two Standard barns have this English based roof system in the township but not all the barns have been examined for interior structure.



The Ferry stone to the peak Standard barn at the southwest end of Centennial Road was built circa 1820. Barn has Principal Rafter System where principals are much larger than common rafters at either side of the Principals. Staggered purlin plates intercept the Principals.

This roof type is denoted by rafters that are in line with the transverse bents that are much larger in cross section than the smaller rafters that are seen between the principal rafters. This roof type was included in many barns of pre 1830 vintage in eastern Berks County and the Lehigh River Valley. In the Saucon River Valley, for some unknown reason, barns with the roof type were built up until 1850 and perhaps even 1860. A third roof type is the early German style – *liegender Dachstuhl* roof support that is somewhat similar to the Principal Rafter type. Only

about eight Standard barns anywhere in the state have been discovered with this unusual roof type. It is very unlikely, that any Longswamp Township Standard barn has this German roof style.

On the interior, transverse framing units or bents on the upper floor level extend from the rear wall to the front wall. Therefore, the front 4 or 5 feet of the bents in many Standard barns are contained within the fore-bay or that area of the front section of the barn that extends or cantilevers beyond the stable wall. It is this cantilevered section that is considered the fore-bay in Standard barns.

The number of bents per barn varies according to the number of bays (see below) in the given barn. Three-bay barns have two bents while four-bay barns have three bents and so forth.

Each bent consists of eave wall posts and usually either one or two other posts along the lengths of the bents. One (or two) of these inner posts very often forms the sides of built-in ladders. At the tops of the bents are upper ties or single full barn width timbers. The ties are not actually a part of the bents as they were added to the bents after they were reared on the upper floor or deck of the barn from a horizontal position to its final vertical resting position. Almost all bents in barns have upper partial or half barn width ties a few feet below the upper ties and also lower half barn width ties about five to six feet or so above the floor level. Non-end wall bents (adjacent to wagon bays in frame barns) often have centered built-in ladders that ascend to the upper ties. Sometimes the ladders are off center by a few feet. In some cases, these ladders ascend to the roof peak. Quite often, braces placed at strategic places are also a part of bents.



The Murphy stone to eaves level Standard barn on the south side of Longswamp Road was built circa 1850. Transverse bent on upper floor level has posts, built-in ladder and braces with partial barn width ties. At top of bent is upper tie than joins to wall plates.

Mow-stead walls flank wagon bays. These walls consist of horizontal boards, most often of oak or pine and sometimes apparently walnut or tulipwood. They are five to sometimes six feet high and they form a barrier to protect the stored crops in the end bays or mows from any activity performed on the wagon floor. Part of this is to prevent the processed or threshed grain from entering the mows. The walls also include doors that either lead to the basement staircase or to a granary or sometimes provide for access from one wagon bay to the adjacent wagon bay.

Bay Numbers

Standard barns consist of a variable number of bays or areas on their upper floor levels. Bays are the areas between adjacent timber frames or between frames and end walls in stone or brick ended barns. Bay numbers are the following – 2,3,4,5 and rarely 6 or 7. Most Standard barns are either 3 or 4 bay structures. This is the case in Longswamp Township. All the barns have wagon or drive-in bays and end bays or mows. Three-bay barns have one wagon bay and two end bays or mows. Four-bay barns have two wagon bays and two end bays. A wagon bay was the area where threshing was done – the act of separation of the seed from the chaff. In barns with four or more bays, only one of the wagon bays acted as an actual place for threshing.

Granaries

Granaries, unless they appeared in specifically designated areas such as rear out-sheds, are nearly always located at the front area of the barns in an end bay. They occupy the entire width of the fore-bay plus an extra 6 to 8 feet to the rear of the designated fore-bay area. Granaries extend the full width of the end bay out to the end wall. They normally have seven-foot ceilings and a front passageway about four feet wide plus a variable number of grain compartment bins – 3 to 5 depending on the barn and its basic size.

The entry door to the granary is in line with the mow-stead wall. A good number of barns retain their original granary doors. It is quite common for granaries to have tally marks (in units of fives) scribbled somewhere on their walls or the entry door. This was an accounting means to know the numbers of bushels of grains they produced.

Crop Storage Areas

Crop storage sections in these barns were basically confined to three areas in the upper floor level. The first was the entire space in the end bays, floor to roof. Also the space above the *oberdenn* or area 10 to 11 feet above the one wagon bay (in a three-bay barn) was devoted to crop storage. In addition, in barns with four or more bays, one or more of the non-threshing wagon bays was also apparently filled with crops floor to roof.

Basements

Like Sweitzers, the basement level in township Standard barns was the area where farm animals were stabled. The numbers of stabled animals depended most often on the size of the barns. The barn size in turn, was dependent upon, in general, the number of tillable acres at each farm.

The structure of the basement was such that, most often, either one or two summer beams, or timbers stretched across the full length (end wall to end wall) of the barn. These timbers were fair sized, about 10 by 10 inches in cross-section or more, and supported all the ceiling joists or transverse timbers. The joists run from the front fore-bay wall to the rear wall of the barn. The bigger the barn the more joists a barn has. The joists in turn supported the floor above in the upper level of the barn. Most frequently, the joists and summer beams were made of oak wood. Quite often, the original wagon floor planks in the wagon bay(s) may be seen above the joists, as well as, but less often, the floorboards in the end bays. Ceiling heights in basements in various barns ranged from 7 1/2 to 8 1/2 feet with an average of about eight feet.



The Murphy stone barn off Longswamp Road in its basement has its original barn length summer beam seen from upper left of photo to near lower right corner of photo. Above the summer is a series of transverse ceiling joists. Joists in turn support the upper floor level.

Horses and cattle or cows were stabled in the basements. Upwards of 95% of the time, horses were placed at the house side of the barn and cows at the away from the house side of the barn. This differential placement seems to be related to the relative ease of access to the horses near the farm lane that so often was located between the homestead house and barn. Staked mangers and manger troughs where horses fed were placed longitudinally (parallel to the roofline) in the basements. The mangers and troughs in the cow areas were placed side to side or transversely at the far end of the barn.

Stable wall doors for horses often had *spriggels* or horizontal wood bars that were drawn across the middle of the door entries. In this manner, horses were apparently confined to the barn interiors at night. At the horse side, curry boxes were set into the stone walls at the stable wall door nearest the house for the placement of objects that involved the care of horses. Also, beams were set into the stone wall about shoulder height or even head height with holes for stout pegs to place harnesses when not in use.

One, two or perhaps three transverse feeding alleys or *fudergong* (depending on the barn size) for passage of humans were placed in the basement next to stable areas. Farmers entered the barn through the stable wall doors and distributed crops and grain in the mangers and troughs for the animals. When two doors were placed at the basement levels at end walls, one of the doors led to a feeding alley.

Four Categories of Standard Barns in Longswamp

Longswamp Township has 83 Standard barns. Each of the barns falls into one of four categories. They are – stone to peak barns, stone to eaves level barns, frame barns and remnant barns. Each of these categories will be discussed along with the number in each class and other details about their construction and additions.

Stone to Peak Standard Barns

A total of 18 stone to peak (SP) Standard barns were identified in the survey. Each of these barns is stone constructed to the peak at their end or gable walls. Of all the Standard barns, no matter their category, these are the earliest built of this barn style. In other words, when Standard barns were first built in the county, likely about 1810, it was a SP Standard barn that was built.

We know that these SP barns were built as the earliest ones because the barns with the earliest dates carved in stone or perhaps wood somewhere in the construction are virtually always the SP ones. SP Standard barns were likely built into the 1840s and probably into the 1850s.

Several of the township barns have what might be called special features, most of which concern the exteriors of the barns. Here are some of those barns -

Special Aspects of Some Stone to Peak Standard Barns

- Two barns have front straw sheds or additions at the front of the barn built in the era of 1890 to 1920 for extra crop storage
- One barn on its end wall has three circular recesses just below the roofline – barns with such recesses most often had barn stars or some kind of decoration and also often dates painted on boards that signify the time of construction. The triple recess aspect in the one barn is unique to any barn in Pennsylvania. The barn is off Kennedy Avenue.

Stone to peak Standard barn built circa 1820 off Stutzman Lane is unique in all of southeast Pennsylvania. It has three circular architectural recesses at its one end wall just below the roof peak. Note arrangement of splayed loopholes – one over three over four.



- Two other barns have a single circular recess just below the peak – one off Centennial Road (Ferry barn) and the other off Smith Lane. Among the thousands of barns the author has seen in Pennsylvania, only about 50 barns have been found with these circular recesses. More of these recesses will be found in the future.
- One barn with a semi-circular recess is seen just below the peak
- At least two barns have a Principal Rafter Roof Support but more barns need to be examined for this construction feature.
- Three barns have splayed loopholes or vertical slits for ventilation – most often these barns were built before about 1830.
- Two barns have brick diamond patterns on its end walls – this feature is most often found in the greater Lehigh River Valley



Stone to eaves level Standard barn on the east side of Dorney Road (just southwest of Lehigh County border) built circa 1840 has two levels of diamond shaped brick patterns on end wall. These brick patterns were incorporated into many Lehigh Valley barns.

- One stone to peak barn has a fertility symbol on its end wall just below the peak – this is a four-sided diamond shaped stone in relief or that is above the level of the basic stone surface of the end wall by two to three inches or so. This stone is about two feet in height. Hundreds of barns have carved in wood fertility symbols in various places, but this barn is unique in all of Pennsylvania. The barn is off Hensingersville Road.

Stone to Eaves Level Standard Barns

A total of 39 stone to eaves level (SEL) Standard barns were identified during the survey. This number is a little more than twice the number of SP barns. Each of the SEL barns is stone constructed to the eaves level at their end or gable walls. The eaves level is even or at a level with the top of the front wall or eaves. These are the barns that are the second built ones in the sequence of appearance in all the Standard barns. These barns were built about 1840 to as late as perhaps 1870. For perhaps 15 to 20 years, barn builders constructed both SP and SEL barns, depending on the farm or homestead.

Like the SP Standard barns, several of the SEL barns also have what might be called special features. Most of these aspects concern the exteriors of the barns. Here are some of those barns -

Special Aspects of Some Stone to Eaves Level Standard Barns

- Three of these barns have gambrel roofs – the one on Mertztown Road is not original.
- This barn has two large rear out-sheds each with an original gambrel roof.
- One barn has a front straw shed – on Kennedy Avenue
- One barn has an end wall wagon entry – on the west side of State Street
- Two barns are probable posted Standard structures – posts support the front fore-bay wall.
- At least three barns have dates – 1842, 1859 and 1860

- Two barns are now modern residences.
- At least one barn has a faux (false) stone end wall, that is, plaster was applied to the entire end wall that was made to look like finely cut stone.
- One barn (on Pilgert Street) has a frame end wall that was originally a stonewall

Frame Standard Barns

A total of 24 frame Standard barns were identified during the survey. This number is a six more than the number of SP barns and fifteen fewer than the number of SEL barns. Each of the frame barns is constructed of frame above the stone foundation basement levels. These are the barns that are the third built ones in the sequence of appearance of Standard barns. The barns were built from about 1850 to as late as perhaps 1920. With some almost definite exceptions, SP Standard barns were leaving the lexicon of barn builder's construction modes as frame barns were coming onto the barn scene. For perhaps 20 years, barn builders constructed both SEL level barns and frame barns.

Like the two previous barn types, certain frame Standard barns also have special features. Most of these aspects concern the exteriors of the barns. Here are some of those barns -

Special Aspects of Some Frame Standard Barns

- Five barns have front straw sheds that converted them to up-country posted Standard style barns
- One barn has an end wall wagon entrance – on Pilgert Street
- Two barns have gambrel-roofs
- One barn was likely an “open” Standard barn originally, that is, no stone foundation wall appears below the fore-bay area of the barn front
- Two barns are dated – 1847 and 1904



Frame Standard barn on west side of Pilgert Street has a rare area gable wall wagon entrance. Barn is circa 1860 and retains a great deal of its originality. Wagon doors here are the sliding type and are not original.

Second and Third Generation Barns – Barn Replacements

A big part of the story of Standard barns in Longswamp Township involves the dynamics of the replacement of early built style barns – both ground barns and Sweitzers with Standard barns. Part of this also concerns the fact that certain early built Standard barns were also replaced with later built Standard barns.

In Longswamp Township, the earliest barns built in the mid-eighteenth century were very likely of either log or perhaps, a lot less frequently, of stone construction built in the then prevailing ground barn style. Ground barns were one-level structures without fore-bays. They had relatively small dimensions and were far smaller than the fore-bay style two-level barns. Ground barns basically served the needs of farmers at small farms.

As farms had greater acreage amounts in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and beyond, that is, they consisted of more tillable acres; a greater need for much bigger barns was experienced. This is when the fore-bay style barn proliferated in many areas in Pennsylvania. At some point, the great majority of homestead farms had their pioneering barn, the ground style ones, replaced with large two-level barns.

But why, it may be asked, are there, at least in Longswamp Township, 21 more SEL barns than SP Standard barns? To be sure, this is a multi-faceted question. One point to ponder is that if the survey was done 50 or more years ago, the numbers might be reversed – a number more SP barns might have been around then, than SEL barns. However, it seems likely, with no proof available, that at any time in the past 50 to 100 or more years, SEL barns were more plentiful than the SP barn type.

It is almost certain that the average SP structure is anywhere from 20 to perhaps 30 years older (or more) than the average SEL barn. Assuming that these barns replaced the pioneer or first generation barns at area farms, that is, the log or stone ground barns, for some reason, certain farmers at particular farms held onto their first built barns longer than other farmers did. These farmers built, to a greater extent, SEL barns at later dates than farmers who had SP barns built.

However, in light of all the changes in replacing barns at many homesteads, it seems certain that a number of farmers, the exact number unknown, may well have had Sweitzers built to replace the first generation barns. It is true too, that at certain farms established late in the eighteenth century, Sweitzers of fair size were the first built barns. Thus, ground barns were never built at these places. At these farms, these Sweitzers may have lasted well past the Civil War when they were replaced with frame Standard barns in the last two or three decades of the nineteenth century.

To know all the barn replacements at all the homesteads, is to know many or most of the dynamics of agricultural practices and other cultural considerations in the township. Different reasons existed at different farms for either keeping existing barns until they were replaced at a later time or replacing them earlier on, say in the first few decades of the nineteenth century with non-Sweitzer style barns. Possible reasons were the farmer's health and age, a farmer's wealth or the passing of one farm from one owner to another. If a farm stayed in one family, there may have been a greater tendency for the family to maintain the old family barn, or even to build another later style barn. Perhaps farms of greater than average fertility prompted some farmers to build new and much greater sized barns (with greater storage volumes) in anticipation of greater expected harvests. The farmers who maintained their old barns and erected other new barns may have placed their new barns adjacent to their old barns or they positioned them a number of feet away from the old barn. One of the barns may have outlasted the other, and when a barn survey was done the barn that was present was the one entered into the barn tally for the township. The other barn would not be counted.

Likely at a number of homesteads in the township, second generation barns were replaced with third or perhaps even fourth generation barns. As can be clearly seen, a host of potential factors existed that could have influenced farmers to maintain their existing first or second generation barns and replace them at various times with later built Standard barns (in most cases). Their decisions are now locked into the various numbers or tallies of barns of each of the three Standard barn types that have been discussed.

Remnant Standard Barns

Just two remnant Standard barns were identified during the survey. Remnant barns are those structures that have lost tremendous but variable amounts of their original structures – both their exterior walls and their interior aspects on both floor levels. In some cases, barns in many areas of the state have lost a good deal of their construction, but the barn class it belongs to, one of the three classes described above, can easily be discerned. In other cases, too much structure has been sacrificed, such that it is quite difficult to know its barn type. In still other cases, it is nearly impossible to know its type, but we still know that the building was a barn.

The Two Remnant Barns



- One structure was a probable SP Standard barn at the northeast corner of State Street and Schlossburg Road.
- Another structure is on the west side of Pilgert Street and only the basement level survives and it was very likely a Standard barn but of unknown type.

Stone barn seen at the corner of Schlossburg Road and State Road likely fell to ruins in the past 30 to 50 years or possibly more.

Summary

Standard barns comprise over 80% of the current population of barns in Longswamp Township. At one time the numbers of these barns were far greater. These barns have disappeared from the cultural landscape for various reasons. Chief among them have been neglect, loss of fundamental utility, susceptibility to bad weather and to a rather small extent modern housing development.

Standard barns first appeared in the township at some point in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and they replaced either the classic ground style barns or later style Sweitzers. But no barn type ever known in the township, as is the case in almost countless other townships in the state, ever experienced the profound success as did the Standard style barns that served the needs of so many farmers. Other barn styles such as ground barns and Sweitzers saw their great demise but this was not the case with Standard barns. They basically never had a replacement barn style until well into the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The exact numbers of Standard barns and all their particular construction aspects in Longswamp Township is basically unique in the entire valley. A very particular set of dynamics existed that is reflected in the numbers of barns and their types and their innumerable construction details that have been discussed in this report and the few previous ones. In order to know all the factors that dictated the survival of Standard barns in the township requires an enormous amount of in-depth research. Suffice it to say that at least a survey of the barns has been done in the past few years. If the survey was not done until another 20 to 30 years or more from now, the opportunity for a fundamental knowledge of the barns in Longswamp would be far less available than exists today.

The last type of structure to consider is the modern or post 1920 barn. This is the topic of the next article in this newsletter. It will be last in the series of articles.

Join us in supporting the Brandywine Community Library



The Brandywine Community Library Association cordially invites you to spend Christmas in New York City!

A free day to sightsee the wonderful holiday sights of the city.

Details are as follows: Saturday, December 6th, depart Topton (Brandywine Community Library) @ 8 am.

Arrive in NYC approximately 10:30am, drop off at Rockefeller Center.

Depart NYC @ 7pm- meet at Bryant Park

Arrive home in Topton approximately 9:30pm

Tickets are \$35/person Round Trip!

Includes bus raffles, free give-aways and snacks!

Reserve your spot now! For seats, contact Kate Huck via email- kr379@aol.com or at 610-597-5702 by phone or text.

Longswamp Township Historical Society

PO Box 6010

Mertztown, PA 19539

Phone: (484) 504-9149

Email: LongswampHistory@gmail.com

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