



# The Kidron Community Historical Society Newsletter

## Sonnenberg Village: moving forward

Since July, the Sonnenberg Village project has advanced quietly but steadily, making enormous strides.

Some of the strides include getting estimates for infrastructure and site preparation as well as estimates to move the Lehman House (formerly referred to as the Leah Lehman House), the Sonnenberg School and the Sonnenberg Church.

Given good weather, the village land will be surveyed and sites for the Lehman and Tschantz Houses will be plotted after the corn growing on the five acres comprising Sonnenberg Village has been harvested.

The order in which the buildings will be moved will be assigned by the Board of Trustees. The *Bit o' Vit* will also spotlight them in this order.

Top priority has been assigned to the Lehman House and Spring House, which were built circa 1838, most likely by Abraham Lehman (brother of original settlers Peter and Ulrich and great-great-grand uncle of the present

owner, Lloyd Lehman) soon after he built his barn. The house is traditional for the time period and has experienced few changes.

Because the house is quite large—one of the few left that has four windows on all sides—it was a popular location for weddings. The wedding would take place upstairs, with the meal being served downstairs.

The house was donated by Lloyd and Esther Lehman on the condition that it be moved from their current location on the south side of Goudy Road between Zuercher and Wenger Roads. Mast Movers have been hired to relocate the home in one piece. The Spring House will be dismantled and moved using volunteer labor. If you are interested in helping relocate the Spring House or constructing the foundation of the Lehman House, please call the Heritage Center at 330-857-9111.

As the date for moving the Lehman House approaches, we will alert KCHS members to watch for this historic sight.

## Coming soon: The CommuniTree project

Need something to do while the snow flies this winter? Try making an item for the 2008 display, *The CommuniTree*, using wood from Kidron's own trees.



The newly-designed CommuniTree logo.

After being on display throughout 2008, these items will be sold at the 2009 members banquet auction. Proceeds fuel the KCHS endowment fund to keep Kidron's heritage alive.

The wood will soon be handed out with a deadline of March 1, 2008 for completed item(s). Call us at the Heritage Center at 330-857-9111.

## Last chance!

Some of this community's most fragile and beautiful heirlooms were brought out into the light for our pleasure this year.

But fall is here and the Heritage Center will begin gearing down toward winter and the gorgeous frakturs in the 2007 annual display will yield their spots to other items and return to their hiding places.

If you haven't seen the display yet, don't despair. The Heritage Center will still be open on Thursdays and Saturdays through December. Take advantage of this last opportunity to stop and see the display before it's gone.



An intricate fraktur design on display in the 2007 annual exhibit, *Celebrations and Memories: Fraktur's Impact on Sonnenberg*.



## From the Director's Desk

by Prudy Steiner



In my job interview for the job of Director of the Heritage Center, now over a year ago, one of the first questions I asked was whether my job would include fund-raising. I was told "no" and that was a relief. Ironically, it wasn't long after I accepted the job that a series of events happened that threatened to change my job description to include the intimidating task of fund-raising.

The events in question are the result of wonderful townspeople who believe in their heritage and want it to be preserved. They showed this by donating several historical buildings to the Historical Society to be moved from their current locations. Thus the dream of building our own little "Sonnenberg Village" began to take shape. When finished, it will sit on five acres northeast of downtown Kidron.

What am I to do? I believe in this project! I want to see it accomplished in my lifetime! Even though we have hopes of receiving government grants, some of these are based on matching funds. So, (sigh), I am willingly going out of my comfort zone and asking for your help. Please consider giving to the Sonnenberg Village project. All donations of any size are appreciated. Call if you would like more information on how you can be a part of this dream.

## Join the fun: become a volunteer

"What if someone asks a question I can't answer? I'm no expert on history! What if someone wants to know dates when things happened?" If you've had qualms like these about being a volunteer, you're not alone. Luckily, expert information and memorized dates aren't what being a volunteer is all about.

What it is about is meeting new and interesting people. This summer, the Heritage Center has entertained visitors from Japan, England, Australia, Iceland, Ecuador, Germany and Switzerland. Where else can you meet such a variety of people? The coolest thing is that they stopped in to see and hear about your history—the history of the Sonnenberg settlement.

Just the other week, Melva Gerber was volunteering and was talking to some visitors from Switzerland. Since Melva's family came from Switzerland, she quickly picked up the Isaac and Katharina Lehman genealogy book in our gift shop to show them the picture of her grandparent's house. Believe it or not, the gentleman exclaimed that he was born in this house and his parents still live in it. How exciting!

Each time the center is open, we need three volunteers: two downstairs to welcome and show our guests around and one volunteer upstairs to show them around and operate the genealogy database. We provide a volunteer handbook, hands-on training, and a good time. Even one day a month would help. Call and join the fun!



Volunteers Ann Groh (wearing a vest), Leora Gerber (in the background) and Glen Groh (r) talking with visitors to the Heritage Center.

## Welcome New Annual, Lifetime and Heritage Club Members

Crist & Nettie Miller–Millersburg

It's not too late to become a member for 2007!  
Contact us today!

## Read all about it!

Local writer Paul Locher recently gave KCHS a rare gift: a moment in the national spotlight. The October 2007 issue of *Early American Life* contains an article by Locher that focuses attention on the Kidron area.

Locher's eight-page article, "Life in Early America: A Rose Among the Tulips," features the Sonnenberg community and the collections of the Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center. Also included are 14 color photos of the collection and area.

*Early American Life* has "since 1970 . . . been the source for information on early American style, decorating, and traditions." The publication describes itself as "the essential magazine about early Americana" ([www.ealonline.com/faq.php](http://www.ealonline.com/faq.php)).

The Heritage Center has a limited supply of extra copies for sale to KCHS members for \$4 per copy (non-members \$4.95). For an additional \$2 per copy, the magazine can be shipped. Please contact the Heritage Center today to reserve your copy.

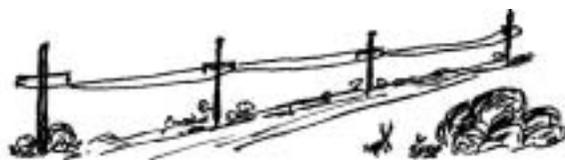
## Holiday shopping available at the Heritage Center

If there are items in our gift shop you would like to purchase, or you would like to see a list of the items in the gift shop, please give us a call at 330-857-9111 or email us at [kidronheritagecenter@yahoo.com!](mailto:kidronheritagecenter@yahoo.com)



## Kidron Korner

# Going Modern in 1935



I was used to doing chores at night or early in the morning. The light of one kerosene lantern hung up high at the edge of the cow stable gave us some light to the end of the nine-cow stable and into the cows' feeding room. But parts of the barn remained relatively dark.

Electric poles had been recently erected along our road, but Menno Gerber petitioned our neighbors to join up with the Orrville electrical system whose price of electricity was, as he believed, quite a bit cheaper. When the owners of the electric poles refused to share them, our neighbors agreed to permit a new line to be put up on their private land, even with the poles running directly through cultivated fields.

Buildings had no electrical wiring in them. Electricians were scarce and expensive. My mother's brother, Ira Amstutz, was working his way through college and had experience installing electrical wiring. He got to be called "the chief electrician of Goshen College." During his summer vacation he offered to wire our buildings. When an inspector asked him what his qualifications were, he said, "I am the chief electrician at Goshen College." That got him the job.

As a teenager, I found it interesting to watch the process of wiring the buildings. I helped by finding the proper tool, poking wires through holes drilled into the walls, and helping to put screws into a few of the switches. It was impressive that the stairway light could be turned on at the bottom of the stairs and turned off upstairs in the hall. A similar arrangement applied to a pole light between the house and barn.

Farmers had no electrical appliances in their homes, shops or barns. The only wiring required was for light. We had one light bulb for the cow stable and one for the horse stable, one for each feeding room, one in the upstairs of the barn and one in the granary. Since I made a practice of reading the Bible while milking cows, I worked near the light bulb. I read through the entire Bible more than once while milking. I strapped my Bible to my knee so I could walk, empty my bucket and sit down to milk the next cow without losing my page.

Dad apparently miscounted the bulbs needed for the barn, because the bulb in the feeding room for the horses was missing. For quite a while, we had to borrow a bulb from some other light socket to use there until he finally had a chance to buy one. Then we no longer needed to unscrew a hot bulb to return it to its place.

In the house, wiring was done for lights only; there were no electric coffee makers, waffle irons or radios, no refrigerators, deep freezers or electric blankets. As the years passed, Uncle Ira added electrical outlets as these appliances became available or affordable.

The current was hooked up at our place on October 25, 1935. I remember the date because it was my sister Dorothy's 15th birthday. It was an impressive birthday event!

—As told to Celia Lehman by her brother Ellis Gerber, now a resident of Mountain Lake, Minnesota

## Thanks to our July, August & September Volunteers

Grace Bytheway  
Esther Falb  
George Falb  
Priscilla Falb  
Anna Gehman  
John Gehman  
Amos Geiser  
David Gerber  
Glenford Gerber  
Leora Gerber  
Melva Gerber

Ann Groh  
Glen Groh  
Carolyn Haas  
Carol Haven  
Gail Johnson  
Eldon King  
Eileen Lehman  
John Lehman  
Shirley Lehman  
Vernon Lehman  
Joan Martin

Myron Martin  
Don Miller  
Bill Moser  
Richard Moser  
Warren Moser  
Clarence  
Neuenschwander  
Bernice Nussbaum  
Bessie Nussbaum  
Delvin Nussbaum  
Don Nussbaum

Heinz Peter  
Rosa Peter  
Ella Rohrer  
Fritz Sprunger  
Janet Sprunger  
Bud Steiner  
Jean Steiner  
Walter Steiner  
Cindy Strubbe  
Sandi Suttle  
Meg Wilkins  
Carol Yoder

**Kidron Community Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 234**  
**Kidron, Ohio 44636**

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October 2007



**Board Members**

President ..... Wayne Liechty  
 VicePresident ..... Paul Neuschwander  
 Treasurer ..... Richard Nussbaum  
 Secretary ..... Gloria Kaufmann  
 Membership Chairperson ..... Leora Gerber  
 Board Members ..... Fritz Sprunger, J. Augspurger  
 Director ..... Prudy Steiner  
*Bit O'Vit* Editor ..... Kris Nussbaum

**Membership Fees**

Individual Annual Member ..... \$ 1 5  
 Husband and Wife Annual Member ..... \$ 2 5  
 Organization Annual Member ..... \$ 3 5  
 Individual Life Member ..... \$ 2 5 0  
 Heritage Club Member ..... \$1000 or more

**Annual memberships are due every January.  
 Thank You!**

The Kidron Community Historical Society of Kidron, Ohio, founded in 1977, operates under the nonprofit charter granted by the State of Ohio. Your tax deductible gifts will help secure the future of the Historical Society and give you a part in preserving the heritage of this unique community. A reminder will be sent when annual memberships become due each January.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Membership \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Donation \_\_\_\_\_

*Send your check to: Kidron Community Historical Society • Box 234 • Kidron, OH 44636 • Phone 330-857-9111*

**Buildings currently projected to become part of  
 Sonnenberg Village**

Lehman House and Spring House (*donated by Lloyd and Esther Lehman*)

Floyd R. Saurer Blacksmith Shop built by Jacob P. Sommer (*donated by the Bill Sommer family with contents*)

1800's Hand-hewn Barn (*donated by Glenn and Phyllis Gerber*)

Tschantz Log House

Sonnenberg One-room Schoolhouse

Third Sonnenberg Church

Wagon Shed – Buggy Shed

John Bixler House (*currently in storage; donated by Karl and Julie Kuhns*)

**Kidron-Sonnenberg  
 Heritage Center**

13153 Emerson Road • Kidron, Ohio

**HOURS**

**APRIL–MAY, OCTOBER–DECEMBER**

Thursday and Saturday

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

*CLOSED JANUARY, FEBRUARY and MARCH*

**JUNE–SEPTEMBER**

Thursday, Friday and Saturday

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Call 330-857-9111**

**for group tours or special arrangements**