



## Kidron Post Office Had Two Beginnings

In 1896, the first Kidron post office was opened by Christian Tschantz, a cheese maker who also operated a small store and bought farm produce for exchange. The first-class U.S. postage stamp rate was \$0.02 and annual post office box rent was \$.20.

Before a post office could be established, the Sonnenberg community needed to be named. A number of suggestions were floated. With some conjecture, the lore is that Nicholas and Cleophas Amstutz preferred a biblical name. Purportedly Cleophas was blindfolded, opened his Bible at random, set his finger, and the nearest place was “the brook Kidron.” So in 1896 the town became known as Kidron, and plans proceeded to petition for a U.S. post office.

Tschantz was appointed the first postmaster and was assisted by his daughters, Lena and Ellen. The post office was housed inside the Tschantz store. Prior to that time, mail was delivered in Kidron from Orrville and later (1903) from Apple Creek, and still later another rural route came from Dalton. Yet today, all three towns maintain rural delivery routes in or within a mile of Kidron.

The Kidron post office was closed on December 30, 1899, and reopened again five months later with Jacob P. Sommer named the postmaster, a position he held from 1900 to 1902. A petition by local farmers and community residents for a rural free delivery route from Kidron was accepted in 1902. However, the rural delivery route was discontinued in 1904, at which time the Kidron post office was also closed. Kidron did not have a post office in town between February 1904 and August 1937.

Despite not having an in-town post office and relying on the three neighboring post offices for rural and post office service, Kidron

**Kidron Post Office continued on pg 2**

*Kidron Community Historical Society*

### *Recognition for Volunteers and Members*

**Tuesday, April 22**  
Sonnenberg Village  
Welcome Center

**6:00 - 7:00 pm**  
ALL SONNENBERG VILLAGE  
BUILDINGS OPEN  
FOR SELF-GUIDED TOURS

DESSERT BUFFET

**7:00 pm**  
BUSINESS MEETING  
Welcome  
Devotions  
Meeting Call to Order  
Reports  
Recognition of Volunteers

PROGRAM  
The Compton Family Story  
Ray Leisy



## A new thing

Because of recent difficulties with the postal system and our bulk mailing list, we would like to create a *Bit o' Vit* email list. Distributing the quarterly newsletter electronically will save the KCHS postage, and ensure delivery in a more timely manner.

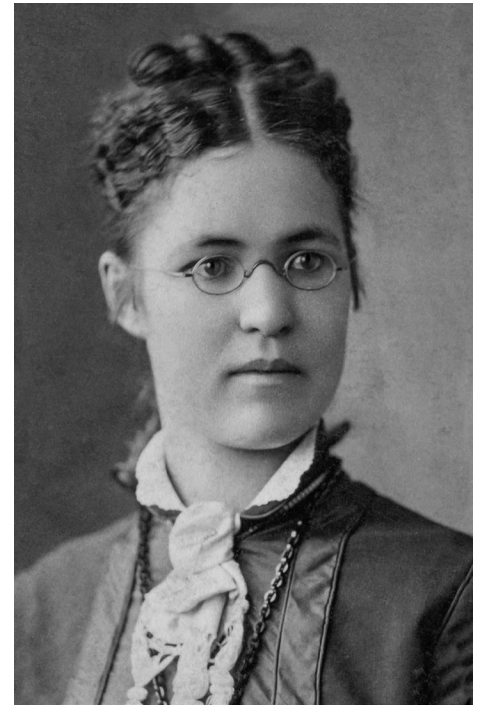
Anyone willing to receive the *Bit o' Vit* electronically may email their contact information to [kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com](mailto:kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com).

## Introducing Otelia Augspurger and Elias Compton

Otelia Augspurger (1858-1954) was born in Butler County, Ohio, to Samuel and Eliza Holly Augspurger. They were members of the Augspurger Church in Butler County. Otelia graduate from the Western Female Seminary and was the first Mennonite woman in the United States to graduate from college.

Otelia met Elias Compton, a Presbyterian, in 1886. They were married and moved to Wooster, Ohio, where Elias became a professor of philosophy at Wooster University, now the College of Wooster. They had four children born in Wooster: Karl Taylor Compton, who became president of MIT; Arthur Holly Compton, chancellor of Washington University and a Nobel Prize winner; Wilson Martindale Compton, president of Washington State University; and Mary Elisa Compton Rice, who spent many years in India as a missionary with her husband, Dr. Charles Herbert Rice. All of the Compton's children grew up in Wooster on College Avenue, and all four were graduates of the College of Wooster.

Attend the program in the Welcome Center on April 22 to hear the rest of the story.



### Kidron Post Office cont from pg 1

continued to see the town grow and new businesses established. Harvey Gardner, editor of *The Kidron News* and local businessman, was able to again open a U.S. post office in 1937, located inside the E. P. Gerber hardware store. The rate for first-class U.S. postage stamps was \$0.03.

Harvey Sprunger served in the new postmaster position. Donovan Huntsberger was appointed as acting postmaster following Sprunger's death in January 1959. In 1963, Kenneth Gerber was appointed as the Kidron postmaster. Other postmasters or officers in charge since Gerber's retirement in 1989 include Daniel Hartzler, Jo Ann King, Kaysie Ramseyer, Tammy Callahan, Martha Hookway, and the current officer in charge, Karen Laney.

In 1960, George Breneman built a red brick building north of the square for his insurance business and included accommodations for the Kidron Post Office. Harvey Gardner retained his PO Box #1. And the first-class U.S. postage stamp rate was \$0.04.

While the Kidron post office did not, and still does not, have a rural route, it does a sizeable amount of business in the thriving village named Kidron. Since at least the early 1980s, the price of U.S. first-class postage stamps has closely followed the U.S. consumer price index. First-class U.S. postage stamps are now \$0.73.

Sources: *Historical Sketches at Kidron, Ohio 1936*, by Levi Amstutz, compiled and published by Harvey Gardner; *Sonnenberg: Haven and Heritage*, James O. Lehman; *Historical Sketches of Kidron Businesses* by Betty Lou Geiser; U.S. Postal Service.

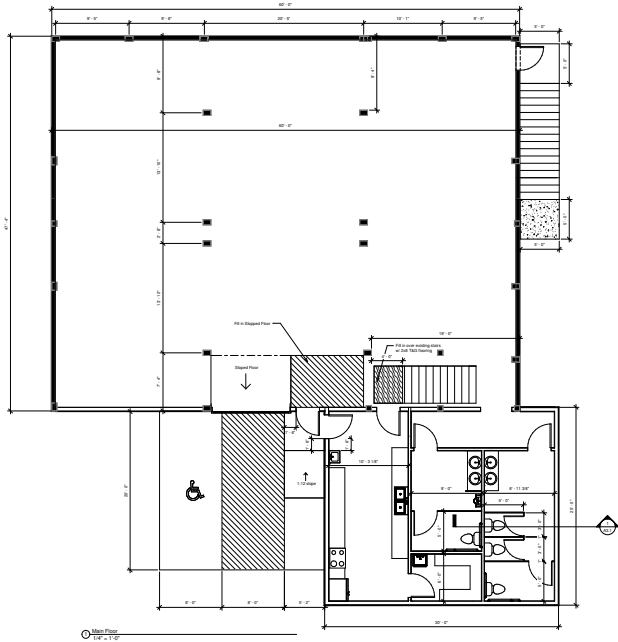


Harvey Gardner was well-known in the Kidron community. Born in Holmes County in 1884, he taught school as a young man and later built a store and creamery in Kidron. In 1937 he established *The Kidron News* which served as a community news sheet and local shopper's guide. Gardner began his printing business on the second floor of the E. P. Gerber warehouse in 1941. He sold *The Kidron News* to Carl and Lena Norr in 1957, and in 1958 opened a smaller print shop at his home on the north edge of Kidron.

During his career in journalism, Gardner authored and published several short books concerning Kidron-Sonnenberg historical facts. Harvey is pictured next to his #1 Kidron Post Office Box in the then new brick Breneman building built in 1960. Gardner held Kidron PO Box #1 until his passing in 1972.

# Sonnenberg Village

## Upgrading the Gerber-Nussbaum Barn



There is an extensive collection of agricultural-related items in the lower level of the Gerber-Nussbaum barn.

### Kitchenette and Restrooms for the Gerber-Nussbaum Barn

The architectural rendition of the proposed addition to the southeast corner of the Gerber-Nussbaum barn for a kitchenette and restrooms has been received.

The KCHS has been awarded a \$60,000.00 grant from the Wayne County Community Foundation. We are looking for approximately \$60,000 in additional funds to complete this project, which will allow the barn to become more event-friendly.



The Nussbaum Summer House is in place. Now we are looking for old summer kitchen utensils to display.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Volunteer Recognition and Members Meeting, Desserts

Tuesday, April 22

Sonnenberg Village Welcome Center

6:00 - 7:00 Sonnenberg Village buildings open for self-guided tours

7:00 Business Meeting

“The Compton Family Story” by Ray Leisy

### KVFD Chicken BBQ – pickup only

Saturday, April 26

### Kidron Days

Thursday - Saturday, June 12-14

Including garage sales, sponsored by Kidron Council

### Sonnenberg Village Festival

Saturday, August 9

Sonnenberg Village



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

330-857-9111

kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com

www.kidronhistoricalsociety.org

*Address Service Requested*

Nonprofit Organization Postage Paid Wooster, Ohio 44691 Permit No. 228
---

SPRING 2025



## Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center

13153 Emerson Road • Kidron, Ohio

**OPEN APRIL through OCTOBER • SATURDAYS • 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**CLOSED NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY, and MARCH**

The Heritage Center is closed November through March, but welcomes appointments to visit the museum and Sonnenberg Village.

Call and leave a message at 330-857-9111 for information or to schedule an appointment.

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.

### Administration

Board President .....	Art Neuenschwander	Board Member .....	Sherri Steiner
Board Vice President .....	Veryl Kratzer	Board Member .....	Diane Sommer
Board Treasurer.....	Joan Nussbaum	Heritage Center Director .....	Max Gerber
Board Secretary .....	Gloria Kaufmann	Sonnenberg Village Project Director .....	Ray Leisy
Board Member .....	Steven Miller	<i>Bit o' Vit</i> Editor.....	Judie Nussbaum

### Kidron Community Historical Society Membership

*Annual memberships are due in January and expire on December 31. Contact the Heritage Center if uncertain of your membership status.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewal

Membership Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_ General Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like a receipt?  Yes  No *Thank you!*

Individual Annual Member ..... \$30

Husband and Wife Annual Member..... \$45

Organization Annual Member..... \$50

Individual Life Member ..... \$300

Heritage Club Member ..... \$1000 or more

Send checks to Kidron Community Historical Society • Box 234 • Kidron, OH 44636