

President's Message

Mark your calendar!

Saturday, May 6, 2017, is auction time at the Stoltzfus House, 1700 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing, Pa. Partake in good food and fellowship. We are hoping to make this auction as successful as before and if possible, even more so!

So mark your calendar as I am sure you deserve a day off.

The purpose of the auction is to bring awareness to the property we are preserving and also to raise funds for this worthy cause.

We appreciate all the donations as this is a Bring Something, Buy Something auction.

You will meet people from numerous parts of the country, including descendents of Nicholas Stoltzfus.

All Stoltzfuses are related to Nicholas Stoltzfus.

You will also meet Elam Stoltzfus from Florida with his new book *The Great Florida Cattle Drive*.

Also on display is the wooden chest that was brought over on the ship Polly by the Nicholas Stoltzfus family from Europe in 1766.

Also meet Ervin Stutzman from Harrisonburg, Va., author of *Tobias of the Amish*, *Emma*, *Jacob's Choice*, *Christian's Hope*, and *Joseph's Dilemma*.

The first two books are about his parents, and the last three are about the survivors of the Hochstetler Massacre.

We'll see you on May 7th!

Moses Smucker
President



The annual Amish Hymn Sing will take place beginning at 6:30 p.m., Friday, June 30. Hymns will be sung in German and English, along with some yodeling to close out the performance.



James D. Hershberger of Shenandoah Valley, Va., a descendant of Jacob Herstetler, whose family was raided by Native Americans in northern Berks, shows a photograph to Fern D. Clemmer outside the Christian Miller homestead in Shillington, which is a regular stop on Amish heritage tours. Miller was one of the early Amish immigrants to Berks County, arriving in the county circa 1750s. He is deemed the last Amish minister in the area. This year's Berks Amish Heritage Tour will take place Oct. 7. See details inside. Photo courtesy of Bill Uhrich/ Reading Eagle.

Elam Stoltzfus to Present Documentary at Benefit Dinner May 4

by Paul Kurtz

How does Florida relate to the Stoltzfus story? Well, Florida is known for beaches, theme parks, retirement communities, Amish in Pinecraft and cowboys. Yep, cowboys. The unbroken circle for filmmaker Elam Stoltzfus has come full circle with his Amish roots evoking memories of horses, cattle, community and family values.

Elam will present his work, and his son, Nicholas, will tell stories at a benefit banquet May 4, at 6 p.m., in Harvest Drive Family Restaurant (Fishers), 3368 Harvest Dr., near Intercourse. Reservations may be sent to Leonard Groff, 58 Ashlea Village, New Holland, PA, 17557-1815. You may contact him at lengroff@gmail.com. The buffet dinner is \$15.00. The event is a benefit for the Nicholas Stoltzfus House project, please consider an additional \$15.00. Checks can be written to NSHPC.

In 2010 Elam and Nicholas came to the Stoltzfus House, shared with Paul Kurtz about the documentaries they have made for Public Television and the State of Florida which depicted natural habitats, such as the Coastal Dune Lakes, Big Cypress Everglades, and ranches, noting how development could occur while protecting the natural habitat. Stoltzfus's films have been featured on PBS across the country.

We need a quality documentary on the Stoltzfus story, and they are interested.

The Stoltzfus Story hinges on a man, Nicholas, born in Saxony, Germany, in 1718. His father, Christoph died when Nicholas was 4 years old. Then his mother Katerina remarried. In Zweibrucken Nicholas worked among Amish, joined them, and married an Amish girl. He experienced treatment given to Anabaptists, then brought his family to Pennsylvania, purchasing land in Berks County by 1771.

Today descendants with the name Stoltzfus and Smucker dominate the Amish of Pennsylvania. Businesses having those names today are found in nearly forty states.

So much is encompassed here, which give Elam and Nic quite a territory to cover.

This event precedes the Annual Benefit Auction at the Stoltzfus House in Wyomissing on Saturday, May 6.



Hundreds gathered under the tent at the Nicholas Stoltzfus House for the 2016 benefit auction.



Pictured is one of the quilts that will be auctioned during the Nicholas Stoltzfus House benefit on Saturday, May 6.

If you would like more information or are interested in donating, please contact Paul Kurtz by email at psku04@ptd.net, by phone at 717-808-7785, or by visiting nicholasstoltzfus.org.

Treasurer's Letter

There are articles appearing frequently in the newspapers detailing developers' plans to raze historic buildings to construct new homes and shopping centers. There are always local citizens speaking out in protest and wanting the buildings to be preserved and restored. Those of us on the Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee board understand, however, that preserving and restoring an historic building is a tremendous undertaking. Even after the building is preserved, there are many ongoing costs to repair and maintain the property.

Although we have been fortunate to receive an exemption from real estate taxes, we do still need funds for insurance, utilities, repairs/maintenance, and professional services such as regulatory filings. Through the efforts of the committee, family and friends, we have been able to provide funding for those needs as well as the cost of publishing and distributing a semi-annual newsletter, postage and office supplies by holding our annual benefit auction as well as other fundraising banquets and events throughout the year. As you can imagine, this requires a lot of work and with the proliferation of these types of events, it becomes more difficult every year to raise the funds needed just for our routine annual expenses. It is our hope that once the barn is completed, rental income will help us cover some of these expenses.

We maintain a separate fund dedicated to the completion of the barn. This fund relies solely on specifically designated donations. We are still in need of \$32,500 to complete the caretaker's apartment and public restrooms in the lower level of the barn. Although the upper level is complete, we are unable to secure an occupancy permit allowing us to legally rent out and use the upper part of the barn until the entire project is complete. Due to changes in the building code several years ago, we are required to install a sprinkler system in the facility. This has added thousands of dollars of additional costs to the project. The project is at a standstill at this time as we do not have the funds to complete the sprinkler system. Until the building inspector signs off on the sprinkler system, we cannot move forward with dry walling and finishing out the apartment even though we have commitments for donated labor and materials for some of those needs.

We have come a long way on our journey. To our many contributors in the past, we are deeply grateful. Every gift, no matter how small, is appreciated. As we strive to reach our goal, would you consider walking along with us? On behalf of the committee, thank you so much!

Vivian L. Beiler, Treasurer.

Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee, Inc.



Uncompleted caretaker's apartment and public restrooms in the lower level of the barn.

Berks County Amish-Mennonite Heritage Tour

Saturday, October 7, 2017

Join this fall's Heritage Tour of beautiful Berks County, Pa., on a chartered bus to see the same land (although quite changed at places) that Amish-Mennonite immigrants settled in the 1700s. Historic sites will be pointed out with stops made at a few old homesteads including the Nicholas Stoltzfus House, Gnaegi Mill, Yoder Cemetery, Jacob Hertzler Home and Cemetery, Strong Jacob Yoder Homestead, Jacob Hochstetler Homestead, Hans Kurtz Home and Cemetery, and more.

This tour will cover many of the early Amish-Mennonite families with an emphasis on the Gnaegi (Kanagy) families in Berks County before they moved to Bethel Township, Lebanon County. Homesteads of families who moved to Somerset County will also be identified.

The all-day tour will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead, 1700 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing, Pa., although the chartered bus will pick up tour participants at the Stoltzfus Deli, Intercourse, at 6:30 a.m. Please mark the attached form as to where you wish to board the bus.

Register now to take a step back into the past and learn about our Amish-Mennonite roots in Berks County! Paul Kurtz, J. Lemar Mast, and Sam Stoltzfus will serve as tour guides for the day. Send \$68.00 per person (check payable to "Mennonite Family History") to: Mennonite Family History 219 Mill Road Morgantown, PA 19543-9516 Phone: 484-798-8556; mast@masthof.com More information including your ticket will be mailed upon receipt of payment. Registration form is on the back of newsletter.

The Nicholas Stoltzfus House
 Preservation Committee
 1700 Tulpehocken Road
 Wyomissing, PA 19610

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Reading, PA
 PI# 415

Send a copy to a friend.

Register for this Berks County, Pa., Amish-Mennonite Heritage Tour on October 7, 2017. The all-day chartered bus tour of Berks County will include an 8:30 a.m. brunch stop at Mohrsville Church of the Brethren and a late lunch stop at Love's Truck Stop (Subway, McDonalds). (Only the brunch is covered with your ticket.)

_____ tickets for Oct. 7 tour at \$68.00/person:

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

(check payable to "Mennonite Family History")

_____ I/We will board the bus at Intercourse, Pa.

_____ I/We will board the bus at Wyomissing, Pa.

Please list name and address for each person coming (as desired for name tag):

Name: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Stoltzfus House in the News

Reading Eagle reporter Bruce Posten wrote about the 2016 Berks Amish Heritage Tour in an Oct. 8 story.



James D. Hershberger of Shenandoah Valley, Va., a descendant of Jacob Herstetler, whose family was guided by Native Americans in northern Berks, shows a photograph to Fern E. Clemmer outside the Miller homestead in Shillington.

TIME TRAVEL

A bus tour visits lesser-known destinations related to the Amish in Berks County.

BY BRUCE R. POSTEN
 READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT

Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee.
 Stoltzfus was joined by Sam Stoltzfus, 73, of Gordonville, Lancaster County. Both served as tour leaders in what was billed as a 250th-year anniversary tour marking the 1766 arrival of Amish forefather Nicholas Stoltzfus in America.
 Nicholas ultimately settled along the Tulpehocken Creek in Berks County in what now is the site of the restored home and rebuilt barn, which will serve as the only museum representing Amish heritage in Berks.
 Amish, Mennonite and non-Amish supporters have worked to restore the historic site during the past 14 years. The barn, which will serve as a cultural museum with a caretaker, still needs to have a heating and ventilation system installed.
 "God, thank you for this day and the blessing of rain, because we needed it badly, and for this time of remembrance and memories and the sacrifices that people made to keep us in your way," said Paul Kurtz, 86, a longtime educator and member of the Nicholas



Participants in the tour of Amish sites in Berks County view the memorial site along South Wyomissing Road in Shillington.



The Stone House in Wyomissing was once the home of John and Barbara (Stoltzfus) Smucker. Barbara was the daughter of Amish forefather Nicholas Stoltzfus. The Stone House has been visited on Amish tours as early as 1959.

and Hamburg; and what was known as the Irish Creek Valley around Centre Township. "Land grants for about 70 families were traced during that period from roughly 1737 to 1790," Kurtz said, estimating that with about seven people per family, the Amish community totaled about 500

Amish tour information
 ■ Paul Kurtz of Ephrata, whose father, Christian, started the Amish tours in Berks County in 1959, said the planned tour for Sept. 30, 2017, will be managed by the Nicholas Stoltzfus Home Preservation Committee and the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.
 ■ To learn more about the Amish tour call 717-808-7785 or email psku04@pld.net.

Book recommendations
 For those interested in the Amish and their Berks County connection, Stoltzfus recommended the following books:
 ■ "Early Amish Land Grants in Berks County, Pa.," Abner Bell, Nequa Bruderschaft Library, Gordonville, Lancaster County (Lists Berks Amish immigrant families and links with their properties.)
 ■ "Revealed Life of Nicholas Stoltzfus," Levi Stoltzfus, "Unser Leit," Leroy Beachy, Goodly Heritage Books, Millersburg, Ohio, 2011. (Gives Beachy's interpretation of Amish history and includes details of Berks immigrants.)
 ■ "Far the book inquires can be made of Lerner Mast of Mastof Press, 279 Mill Road, Morgantown, or phone 610-286-0258. [See Amish >> D3]