

Winter 2021

Historical Journal



LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 65 145 E. Main Street, Lititz, PA 17543

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A Pair of Fiddles

Marian L. Shatto

Two violins owned by the Lititz Historical Foundation are on display in one of the instrument rooms in the Lititz Moravian Archives Museum. They were placed there in 1986 on long-term loan by mutual agreement of the two organizations. The Archives Museum took them to James Fegley, luthier of Mount Penn, PA to be restored for exhibit, but to the best knowledge of this writer, neither has been played in public since then.

Earlier this year the Archives engaged Philip Kass, internationally noted expert in fine string instruments, to examine and evaluate the strings in its collection. The two LHF violins were included in the process, which was observed with great interest by LHF Board Members Tom Wentzel and Marian L. Shatto, and for a good part of the time by Lowell Wenger, LHF Archivist. What follows are the narrative descriptions provided with the instruments and Kass' findings on each one.

A. This violin, marked by Sebastian Kloz, 1700, was the property of Werner K. Baer, RD4, Box 385, Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Statement from donor:

“This instrument was the property of a family in Aries (sic)¹ France, for at least two generations, and was used by this family to discharge a debt in 1915 to Kurt Arthur Baer, who was medical officer for the Germans, in charge of the village of Ar-

ies, for four years. He treated the villagers during all this time, and the French family in question insisted that he take this violin, which they stated to be genuine and valuable, and the biggest gesture of appreciation they could make. Werner K. Baer, being a boy of eight at the time, became a student of the Gymnasium in Aschersleben, Germany (the Baer home town), and had violin lessons there for about a year or two in 1919.



Above: A front view of the Klotz violin. Story continued on page 3 inside.

What an Extraordinary Day!

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On Friday November 19th, we participated in the annual Extraordinary Give, which is Lancaster County's largest day of giving. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to raise \$7,010 in donations during that 24-hour period!

WOW!

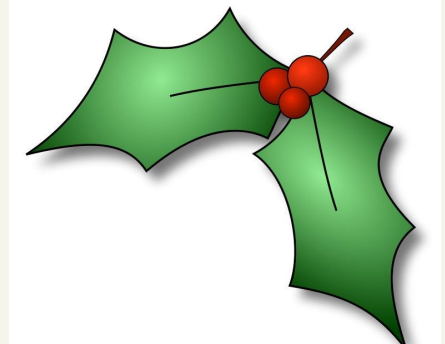
We just wanted to take this time to thank each and every one of you who made a donation to help support our mission. Thank You so much again!



We wish you a joyous holiday season, and a happy, healthy new year!

We will close for the season at the end of December, but will reopen in late April of 2022.

*Thanks to everyone who supported us during this past year!
We couldn't do it without you!*



A Pair of Violins Con't:

His teacher also spoke highly of the violin. In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Baer and son Werner, emigrated to Elizabeth, New Jersey, where Werner attended college, receiving an electrical engineering degree in 1930 from Newark College of Engineering in Newark, New Jersey. His parents turned the violin over to him in hopes that one of his children might wish to study the violin, but they are now grown and never showed an inclination for that instrument.

“In December of 1964, Mr. Zeswitz, Reading music dealer, stated he does not think this is a true Kloz but is certainly of great age. Instrument was presented to the Lititz Historical Foundation.”

Evaluation by Philip Kass:

“Violin bear[s] a facsimile of a Sebastian Kloz label. This looks to be commercial French or German of the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Indeed, the work looks very German in character, but the scroll uses a pattern that we normally associate with the French.”

B. Violin presented by William M. Diehm, 1625 Ridgeview Avenue, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Presented to the Lititz Historical Foundation.

Statement from the donor:

“The violin accompanying this note was one of many instruments made by Abraham Carpenter during the early part of this century in Lititz.²



“It was purchased from him, for me, by my parents Stanley and Mary Diehm in 1917. It was selected from several violins he made that were then unsold, by the late Victor Wagner, with whom I was then studying.

“I am presenting it to you, not because of its antiquity or intrinsic value, but rather as an example of the fine craftsmanship performed by the artisans of early Lititz.”

Evaluation by Philip Kass:

“Unlabeled amateur-made violin, made from imported parts, bearing multiple repair inscriptions on the interior. ... [T]his sort of instrument is commonplace, and similar ones were even sold through the Sears catalogue.”

Additional notes:

¹It has not been possible to identify a French town named “Aries.” It might be a misreading of “Arles,” though that community is not in a section of France that was occupied by Germany during World War I.

²A few weeks prior to the examination by Kass, the Rev. Ginny Tobiassen of Winston-Salem visited the Archives Museum, bringing her labeled Carpenter violin to visit its “sibling.” The handwritten label reads “1901 no. 29 Made by A.S. Carpenter Lititz, Penn.” A comparison of the two instruments showed significant differences in quality of workmanship and tone. That Carpenter clearly labeled the superior instrument but not the other leaves the latter’s origin open to speculation, with no chance now for firm answers. How long had it sat unsold in his shop? Was it an early trial as Carpenter developed his violin-making skills, or did he perhaps take it in trade for the sale of one of his own construction? Having been in business for a number of decades, was Carpenter in 1917 selling off odds and ends from the shop in anticipation of retirement? What we can say is that William Diehm sufficiently appreciated his experience as a student playing the violin to see to its preservation with the Lititz Historical Foundation.

Get into the Holiday Spirit!

Join the Lititz Historical Foundation in conjunction with the Lititz Moravian Archives for the annual Community Christmas Carol Sing Thursday, December 9th, beginning at 7pm.

This is a FREE event--come one, come all!

The event will take place at Moravian Church Square. The Moravian Trombone Choir will be on hand and free song sheets will be handed out as you, your friends, neighbors, and family will sing holiday classics. Afterwards, all are welcome to warm up inside Fellowship Hall where light refreshments will be served. The Putz will also be available for various showings throughout the evening in the church's social hall.

See you there!

The next evening, on December 10th, the Lititz Historical Foundation will hold its Annual Christmas Candlelight Tour!

What to expect:

Ticket holders will receive a 40-minute guided tour of the 1792 Johannes Mueller House, and will learn the story of Mueller and his family, as well as history and customs of the early Moravian community of Lititz during the 18th century.

Guests must pre-register! Cost is five dollars per person. Groups are limited to eight persons, maximum. Tours will take place every 20 minutes, beginning at 5pm; with the last tour beginning at 8:20pm. Please arrive 10 minutes before your tour timeslot. Charge by phone beginning November 10th by calling the Lititz Historical Foundation at 717-627-4636 or stop into their museum and gift shop on Fridays or Saturdays, from 11am-5pm. Minimum credit card charge for phone orders is \$10. First come, first served. Paid tickets may be picked up on the evening of the tour. The Lititz Museum and Gift Shop will also be open that day from 11am-9pm. For more information, call 717-627-4636. ***THIS EVENT IS NOW SOLD OUT, but the museum and gift shop will be open that day from 11am-9pm!***



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HISTORICAL JOURNAL

Christmas Stars Still Shine Bright After Eight Decades

Cory Van Brookhoven

Traveling through Lititz, one can't help but notice the beautiful stars which adorn the downtown street lamps each holiday season.

And it all started over 80 years ago.

In December of 1937, it was decided by the Lititz Chamber of Commerce that these "stars of lights" would be placed on top of three lights at the Roebuck Memorial Fountain and on seven of the lights adjacent to the square. The bulbs at the fountain were yellow, while the other lights were colored.

That year on Christmas Eve, a carol sing took place at the square at 10:30pm. The community came out in droves, and gazed upon the stars for the very first time in Lititz history. What a sight of awe it must have been!

In 1939, ten new stars were added; and by 1940 Lititz boasted twenty-two more which were constructed by Mr. Robert Hower, a local Industrial Arts teacher. Due to this increase, the placement was extended — they would be lined along Broad street from Orange to Lincoln Avenue; and from Main to Cedar streets.

By 1945, the count was up to thirty-eight stars; and as of 2017, there are nearly fifty stars that shine their inspirational lights throughout downtown each Christmas season.

From the young to the young at heart, even after over eight decades, local and visitors alike continue to be moved by these simple yet iconic decorations in Lititz.



DID YOU KNOW...?



Shown here is a home that once stood at 361-363 East Main Street. While this structure has gone through some changes, the original building still stands.

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