



The Inkwell



March 2026

PO Box 1021, 45 E. Corydon Street, Bradford, PA 16701

814-362-3906

Board of Directors:

Alex Caruso
Anne Bouquin
Howard Blumenthal
John Place
Pete Gardner
Ron Binder
Robert Esch
Yvonne Cattoni

Herbig Bakery Curator & The Inkwell editor

Sally Costik
**Crook Farm
Coordinator**
Kellie Hopkins
Genealogist
Molly Lindahl

Inside this issue:

Community Sing-A-Long

Crook farm farmhouse
reaches 50th anniversary

Predicting the Future

Volunteers Needed

Coming Events

New Fire Proof Files

Spring Is Finally Coming!

Yes, the flowers have begun to emerge, and I heard the peepers last night—sure signs that winter is finally on its way out. To celebrate the season, the **new schedule of events for the Bradford Landmark Society** has been included in this edition of *The Inkwell*. Be sure to mark the important dates on your calendar so you don't miss a thing!

As you know, this year, 2026, marks the 250th anniversary our nation and we've planned a great event on June 28. You'll read the particulars inside this newsletter, but here is a hint – it will be fun, loud, and everyone will join in!

A couple of weeks ago a volunteer and I went down into the basement of the City Hall to search for old HARB – Historic Architectural Review Board records, and while we didn't find those, we did find some great old photographs of Bradford in the 1960s and two old scrapbooks from 1958-1968 with lots of old clippings from things happening in Bradford during those years. As I constantly tell anyone who will listen, there is still lots of undiscovered Bradford history still out there: photographs, documents, memorabilia, scrapbooks, and more. And why were we looking for old records? Well, we are currently working on a book about the buildings in the historic district and want to be as historically accurate as possible. Even though we have lots of information at the Herbig Bakery there is always room for more. And who knows? You may have exactly what we are looking for in your attic, closet, or stashed away.



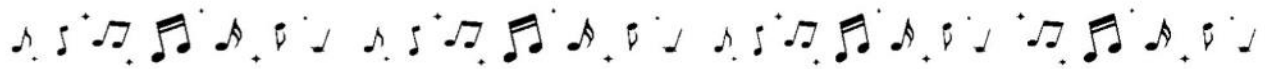
The Landmark Society is currently open on Friday mornings, from 9AM to 4PM, although special arrangements can be made for individual appointments. We can be contacted via email at info@bradfordlandmark.org or by calling 814-362-3906. Please visit our website at www.bradfordlandmark.org to learn more about the Society, the Herbig Bakery, The Crook farm, and interesting articles on local history.

Join us at the Crook Farm

June 28th, at 2PM for a Patriotic Music

Community Sing-A-Long!

And make history. Again.



In September 1921, the city held a huge community sing in the public square to celebrate the end of World War I. Over 2000 people gathered and sang together that night and the Bradford Landmark Society realized that it was also a great way to celebrate this year's 250th birthday! And we have the perfect place, time, and music to do it.

The Twin Tiers Community Band will provide the music, we'll provide the song sheets – although we bet you know all the words to songs like Yankee Doodle Dandy, America the Beautiful, This Land is Our Land, It's a Grand Old Flag, My Country Tis of Thee, and so on. And the place, of course, is the beautiful, and historic Crook farm on Seaward Avenue.

No special singing talent is needed or expected – we want you to come for the fun of it!

What better way to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday than raising your voice in song with hundreds of other people!

Ice Cream, popcorn, and hot dogs will be available!

Fifty Years Ago, on March 26, 1976, the Crook Farm farmhouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places

When the Crook Farm farmhouse was included on the National Register back in 1976, it held the distinction of being the first building in the Bradford area to be so designated. Although it didn't hold that honor very long (Old City Hall became part of the National Register just two months later, in May 1976) this year we celebrate the Crook Farm farmhouse on its 50th anniversary.

Currently, eight other sites in McKean County are also on the Register, with three of them in the Bradford area, including the Rufus Barret Stone building at 11 Boylston Street which was added in 1982; the Bradford National Guard Armory at 28 Barbour Street, added in 1991; and the much larger Bradford Historic District, which includes 171 properties located on Main Street, Mechanic Street, Congress Street, Chestnut Street, Chambers Street, Boylston Street, East Washington Street, East Corydon Street and Chautauqua Place.

The Society had been looking for a suitable site as early as 1971. Initial plans were to create a complete oil field village but this plan soon expanded as the Bradford Landmark Society realized the restoration of the old farmhouse and surrounding farm buildings would provide an educational aspect that showcased the living history of the area's early settlers in a unique country setting.

The farm had been owned by Genevieve Crook Rapp, a grandchild of the original settlers, Erastus and Betsy Crook. It is believed that the farmhouse dates back to 1847, and is the oldest surviving house in the Tuna Valley area. Mrs. Rapp was in a nursing home in 1974, but was eager to sell the farmstead to a group that would preserve the history of the house. An agreement was reached, and the Bradford Landmark Society bought the farm in 1974 for \$17,000.

The Crook Farmhouse nomination was completed by Marion Bromeley, then vice president of the Bradford Landmark Society in September 1975 who was determined to place the farmhouse on the National Register by the nation's Bicentennial in 1976. And she succeeded!

The nomination reads, in part:

The Crook Farm restoration is conceived primarily as an educational tool to demonstrate pioneer housekeeping and family life of this unique geographical area, together with the demonstration of various occupational pursuits performed there – timbering, maple sugar making, cobbling, and carpentering. The farm also has conservation and architectural significance – the house's structure is based on an unusual post and beam skeleton with thin board curtain walls.

Restoration took several years and was accomplished with detailed advice from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission in Harrisburg, preservation experts, and knowledgeable architects. This approach assures accuracy and authenticity.

Today, the Crook Farm contains the original farmhouse, a barn, a carpenter shop, a weaver shed, a candle shop, a blacksmith shop, a replica of an old Bradford bank, and a schoolhouse. Events are held throughout the year, including the annual school program, which began in 1979, bringing in fourth graders from both Pennsylvania and New York State schools to experience a one room school house, and observe the daily life on a rural farm in 1880, music gatherings, crafts, and special holiday and seasonal events.



The farmhouse as it looked in 1975 shortly after its purchase by the Landmark during restoration. This photograph was included in the official nomination form to the United States Park Service, which manages the National Register of Historic Places Inventory.



The farmhouse as it looks today. Notice the front porch has been reduced as well as the roof across the front and the windows replaced with historically appropriate six over six panes. Even the television antenna, to the right of the old house, is gone!

Welcome to the Future - What One Man Predicted in the Year 1900

One hundred and twenty-six years ago, a man named John Elsweth Watkins, Jr. made some remarkable predictions about what would happen in the year 2000. He wrote "These prophecies will seem strange, almost impossible," but explained that he had consulted the country's "greatest institutions of science and learning" for their opinions. Published in the December 1900 edition of the Ladies Home Journal, a popular woman's magazine, some were remarkably accurate, while others? Not so much. Here are nine of them. What do you think?

1. **500 hundred Million People.** There will probably be from 350 million to 500 million people in American and its possession by the lapse of another century. Nicaragua will ask for admission to our Union after completion of the great canal. Mexico will be next. Europe, seeking more territory to the south of us, will cause many of the South and Central American republics to be voted into the Union by their own people.

Well, he was almost right about the population. As of the 2020 census, there are over 330 million people in the US. The 'great canal' he was talking about is the Panama Canal, which was started by the French in 1881 but abandoned by that country in 1889, due to tropical disease and engineering problems. The US began construction in 1904, and completed it in 1914 but Nicaragua, Mexico, and other South and Central American countries have never seriously contemplated becoming part of the US.

2. **The American will be Taller** from one to two inches. His increase of stature will result from better health, due to vast reforms in medicine, sanitation, food and athletics. He will live fifty years instead of thirty-five at the present, for he will reside in the suburbs. The city house will practically be no more.

Again, he was right about Americans being taller. In general, we are two inches taller than the average person in 1900 due to improved nutrition, better healthcare, and higher living standards. And the average life expectancy in 2026 is 79 years of age, not 50.

3. **There will be no C, X or Q in the everyday alphabet.** They will be unnecessary. Spelling by sound will have been adopted, first by the newspapers. English will be a language of condensed words expressing condensed ideas, and will be more extensively spoken than any other. Russian will rank second.

Nope, we still use c, x, and q. English is the most spoken language in the world (1.5 billion), although Mandarin Chinese has the most native speakers. Russian is currently ninth on the list of worldwide spoken languages.

4. **Hot and Cold Air from Spigots.** Hot or cold air will be turned on from spigots to regulate the temperature of a house as we now turn on hot or cold water from spigots to regulate the temperature of the bath. Homes will have no chimneys, because no smoke will be created within their walls.
5. *Well, air conditioning doesn't come from spigots, and neither does heat although he was right about regulating the temperature of a house. And yes, most homes don't have chimneys anymore.*
6. **No Mosquitoes or Flies.** Insect screens will be unnecessary. Mosquitoes, house flies and roaches will have been practically exterminated. Boards of Health will have destroyed all mosquito haunts and

breeding grounds, drained all stagnant pools, filled in all swamp lands, and chemically treated all still water streams. The extermination of the horse and its stable will reduce the horse fly.

Well, actually, mosquitos and other pests continue to prove problematic as well as disease carrying.

7. **Ready Cooked Meals will be Bought** from establishments similar to our bakeries of today. They will purchase materials in tremendous wholesale quantities and sell the cooked foods at a price much lower than the cost of individual cooking. Food will be served hot or cold to private houses in pneumatic tubes or automobile wagons. The meal being over, the dishes used will be packed and returned to the cooking establishments where they will be washed.

Sure, sounds like today's fast-food restaurants and Door Dash delivery system.

-
8. **There will be no street cars in our large cities.** All traffic will be below or above ground when brought within city limits. In most cities, it will be confined to broad subways or tunnels, well lighted, and well-ventilated or on high trestles with "moving sidewalk stairways" leading to the top. These underground or overhead streets will teem with capacious automobile passenger coaches and freight wagons, with cushioned wheels. Cities, therefore, will be free from all noises.

He did correctly forecast elevated roads and subways. And moving 'sidewalk stairways' is the same as today's escalators. But wouldn't it be nice if cities were free from all noises?

-
9. **Everyone will Walk Ten Miles.** Exercise will be compulsory in the schools. Every school, college and community will have a complete gymnasium. All cities will have public gymnasium. A man or woman unable to walk ten miles at a stretch will be regarded as a weakling.

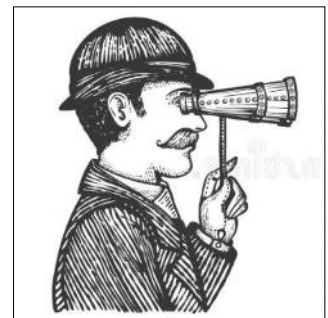
Not ten miles per day, but lots of people try to get 10,000 steps in per day. 10,000 steps generally equal approximately 4-5 miles for the average person.

-
10. **There will be airships,** but they will not successfully compete with surface cars and water vessels for passenger or freight traffic. They will be maintained as deadly war vessels by all military nations. Some will transport men and goods; others will be used by scientists making observations at great heights above the earth.

Watkins only imagined air-ships for military and scientific use. It would be another three years before the first successful, powered, controlled, and sustained heavier-than-air flight was achieved by Orville and Wilbur Wright on December 17, 1903, in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. In 2023, airlines carried 853 million passengers.



What do You predict
will happen in the next
125 years?





Needed!

Calling Everyone – yes, **You!**

We are hoping to build our volunteer team for the 2026 year. Help when you can, as often or as little as your schedule allows. Can't help with one event? That's ok we'll check with you on the next! This is a wonderful way to be a part of Crook Farm's history and help keep it active for future generations. no experience needed.

Volunteer help may include:

- * Assisting with tours
- * Parking Attendants
- * Supporting live demonstrations
- * Setup and cleanup during events
- * General event help

Interested? Message us (Facebook pages Crook Farm or Bradford Landmark Historical Society) for more info, or send us an email at crookfarm@bradfordlandmark.org or call us at 814-362-3906.

Coming Events

Barn and Yard Sale, May 23. Large multi-vendor sale at the farm. Sell your stuff or buy from others! Either way, it's a great time to look for bargains and explore the grounds.

Museum and Market Day, June 13. Discover the art of Blacksmithing along with many other crafts of the time during our Museum & Market Day on Saturday June 13th! Live demonstrations of blacksmithing, weaving, spinning, cooking and more! Vendors, food, and children's activities round out a fun day of hands-on history at the Crook Farm.

Community Sing-A-Long and Patriotic Music, June 28. Join us to celebrate America250PM with a crowd sing-a-long to well-known patriotic songs. Too shy to sing? Bring along a chair and listen to all the voices.

Creative Women Workshop, July 25. After a year's hiatus, it returns! Learn a new skill, brush up on an old one, and enjoy the company of women who enjoy being creative. Watch for further information and registration and a list of classes to be offered.

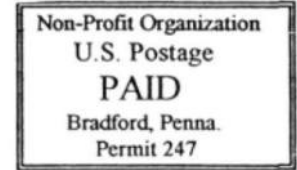
Crooktop Music Festival, August 27-30. It's time for jam sessions, rough camping and musician-led activities at the Crooktop Old Time Music Festival, Aug. 27 to 30 at Crook Farm in Bradford, PA.

Apple Harvest Festival, October 10. Get ready for a full day of fun — join us for historic tours and demonstrations like ink pen writing and laundry day, pumpkin painting, delicious food and drinks, live music, and a community dance. Let's come together to celebrate the season and enjoy autumn in all its glory.

Wreath Making Classes, late November and early December. Sign up for our annual "Make a Wreath" classes at the Crook farm. A great way to kick off the Christmas season!

Classic Country Christmas Carol sing around, December 15.

Bradford Landmark Society
PO Box 1021
45 E. Corydon Street
Bradford PA 16701



Return Service Requested

Meanwhile, at the Herbig Bakery....



An old fireproof cabinet sits next to a newly acquired cabinet inside our headquarters at 45 E. Corydon Street.

Our big news is that we managed to acquire three more fireproof filing cabinets for the Landmark at 45 East Corydon Street. Our present fireproof filing system is filled with photographs and we desperately needed several more cabinets to keep them secure. After some investigation, I found three more in Bradford! We now have seven fireproof files. Yay!

Fireproof filing cabinets are necessary to safeguard all our photographs – and we have over 15 thousand of them – safe from any possible fire, flood or damage. Two of the new cabinets are courtesy of Stan Pecora, who had two unused fireproof filing cabinets in storage at PNC bank. Another one came from the Marilyn Horne/Seneca building. That particular cabinet had been abandoned several years ago, since the keys had been lost and the file drawers could no longer be closed without any way to reopen them. UPB was kind enough to donate this file to us, and we had Austin Locksmith from Olean fix the lock AND transport all three very heavy files (each weighed over 600 pounds) to the Herbig Bakery. Thanks to everyone who helped!