



THE BRADFORD LANDMARK SOCIETY

# The Inkwell

45 E. Corydon Street, Bradford, PA 16701

814-362-3906

October 2008

## Farewell to Summer

### Board of Directors

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### Volunteers at the Bakery

Mary Ryan

Gordon Ernest

Molly Lindahl

Bill Knight

Diann Hatch

### **Hours of Operation:**

Herbig Bakery, 11AM – 2PM,  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Historic Crook Farm by Appointment

Judith Yorks, Director

How quickly the time flies! In only a few short weeks it will be Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, and snow, snow, snow! But let's not think of that right now, let's focus on this wonderful autumn that we are having.

This edition of the Inkwell newsletter covers a wide range of topics, from Oak Hill Cemetery, to the Crook Farm Fair, to Eskimos. It's truly a "cornucopia" of information and we think that you will enjoy reading it. So sit back, pour another cup of coffee, and take a moment to relax and read...

First, the Eskimos. Our January 2008 newsletter contained an article on an Eskimo family that visited Bradford in 1927, on a nationwide tour to introduce the "neighbors to the north" to those of us who live in the lower 48 states. The Ahkla family from Anchorage was part of a promotional tour and stopped by Bradford, enchanting all who met them and their reindeer. School children in Rixford were even allowed to skip school to come to Bradford and see "real live Eskimos". Imagine our great delight when the Ahkla's great-grandson read our article and sent us an email, filling in some information on his family over the last 81 years. We think you'll enjoy reading about Jim and Trixie Ahkla and their children.

And the Crook Farm Fair was a success, and chairman Bob Esch has written a descriptive article on the fair activities and events. If you weren't there, it was a great weekend and you missed lots of good food and entertaining music.

Molly Lindahl, one of our volunteers, is an active member of the newly formed "Save the Cemetery" Oak Hill Association, and was kind enough to write an article on the progress being made by that organization, which is trying to restore the old cemetery on the hill.

And of course, there is always lots of historic and local information to keep you up to date on what's happening at the Bradford Landmark Society.

# Crook Farm Fair 2008

With all the planning behind us the Farm becomes a very busy place with volunteers cleaning the House, the School and all the other structures and the gardens are readied for our guests.

A full day of raising tents and from a distance the farm is consumed in bright white tents. Just as the last stake is driven and the ropes are tightened the Craft Vendors begin to arrive with cargo loads of hand made goods; baskets, soaps, dolls, gems and the fragrance of herbs and spices fill the air. There is something for everyone.

The weekend begins with a reception to honor the many Supporters of the Farm and the Bradford Landmark Society. What a wonderful evening with music, food and best wishes from all our friends, it truly makes us realize how fortunate we are.

Early Saturday morning the anticipation is over. Reveille can be heard coming from the Bucktail Regiment Encampment. The coffee is ready and the volunteers are preparing the food for the day. A menu fit for the best of country picnics; barbecued Chicken & Ribs, Country Sausage, fresh Corn on the Cob, Salt Potatoes, Cole Slaw, Hot Dogs and Burgers and Ice Cream.

The Artisans have arrived and as the Vendors prepare to display their wares, Music and Song fills the air. It seems almost instantly the farm grounds are consumed with people coming through the gates to share in the excitement of a true "Country Fair". The talk of History, laughter, music and dance can be heard from everywhere on the Farm. On the east side of the grounds there is gunfire as the Bucktail Regiment skirmish with Confederate troops.

Sunday morning our day starts before the sun comes up. The griddles are made ready for breakfast; pancakes, eggs, sausage and the smell of coffee glides over the grounds. The Rooster behind the barn crows and reveille from the encampment sounds. Gospel music begins and is so fitting for a Sunday morning this beautiful. Van Wagner talks about history past and our visitors are arriving to be entertained, fed and to barter for the homemade crafts.

At the end of the day, volunteers work to clean up and store all the necessary items needed for next year and the Farm is returned to quiet. The talk turns to plans for next year, the 30<sup>th</sup> Crook Farm Fair. Another successful Crook Farm Fair comes to an end.

The Bradford Landmark Society would like to thank our Membership and sponsors and a very special thanks to all the volunteers, Vendors, Artisans, Community Partners and all those who attended this special event. See you next year!

—

- Bob Esch, Crook Farm Fair Chairman

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Schoolhouse No. 8



Crook Farm Homestead



Bank Building

# OAK HILL CEMETERY

You have no doubt noticed, or at least heard about, the positive things happening at Oak Hill Cemetery here in Bradford. Due to the efforts of historically minded individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses, the Cemetery evolved from one showing its age to a grounds befitting the fine citizens and leaders there interred.

Vandalism, the high cost of maintenance with limited monies from the Perpetual Care Fund, as well as out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Ralph Rose forced him to announce he and his workers were no longer able to maintain the cemetery and appealed to the community to step up to the plate. It became apparent to Keven Collins, foreman for Luther Excavating a change was in order after he and Dick Luther, owner of Luther Excavating, spent countless volunteer hours hauling gravel, leveling roads, and repairing damage.

In response, a group of concerned citizens met in March 2008, forming a "Save The Cemetery Committee", the purpose being to formulate a plan to generate funding for Cemetery maintenance. By July, the Oak Hill Cemetery Association was in place with a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary.

The first Volunteer Clean-Up Day was held April 12<sup>th</sup> to prepare for the mowing season. Work efforts included hand raking, along with branch, brush and litter pick-up. The Cemetery Association was the recipient of a one-time donation from the Blaisdell Foundation making it possible to hire Josh Anthony's "Keepin' It Green" for the mowing season. By the time the second Volunteer Clean-Up Day occurred on May 10<sup>th</sup>, Josh and his crew had the mowing and trimming well underway. A milestone was reached this year when for the first time in a long while, the entire cemetery had been mowed and trimmed.

Considerable drainage and road work was done by Frisina's, making the upper roads drivable in a passenger car versus the necessity of navigating the roads in a four-wheel drive vehicle at the beginning of Spring. The roadbed is now stable and major drainage problems have been addressed and corrected.

The condition of the Cemetery has come a long way in a short period of time, however, now's not the time to sit back and become complacent. It is imperative to keep the momentum going through fund-raising efforts, volunteerism and education. Overgrowth is continuing to be removed, opening up the cemetery, making it more visible. The community is encouraged to alert the Bradford Police Department if they see suspicious activity in the Cemetery.

Plans are being made by Linda Delaney, author of "Gamble For Glory", to compile and publish a book on the rich history of Oak Hill Cemetery. It is the largest cemetery in McKean County and one of the oldest. Many of Bradford's founding fathers, prominent citizens, pioneer residents and individuals of all walks of life are buried in this non-denominational cemetery.

The Bradford Landmark Society was presented the opportunity to digitally scan the Cemetery's Lot Deeds and photocopy the burial books. These records, along with digital scans of the two Cemetery maps, are tremendous tools for the family researcher. The Bradford Landmark Society is now your contact for locating graves and information associated with burials. For those who've previously contacted Wright Monumental Works for this information, you'll want to now direct your inquiries to the Bradford Landmark Society. We can be reached by mail at 45 E. Corydon St., Bradford, PA 16701, by email at: [info@bradfordlandmark.org](mailto:info@bradfordlandmark.org) or by telephone at (814) 362-3906. All we ask is your patience as we "learn the ropes" and work back and forth among three or more files on the computer to answer your questions.

We'd like to thank Ralph and Judy Rose, Kelly Platko, Barb Steinhauer and Greg Buckner for their assistance interpreting these records. Another thank you goes to Chuck and Dan Lang of Lang Surveying for digitally scanning the large cemetery maps. Without the help of these friends, we wouldn't have this information to share with you.

*Individuals wishing to donate to the Oak Hill Cemetery Association can do so by mailing their contribution to: "Oak Hill Cemetery Association", PO Box 526, Bradford, PA 16701. All donations are sincerely appreciated.*

# Eskimo Family Update

A recent Inkwell newsletter described a 1927 visit from an Eskimo family (and reindeer), whose presence was part of a nationwide educational tour to acquaint "the lower 48" with the lifestyles of "our friends to the north". The newsletter article read, in part:

*"In 1927, city officials in Bradford decided to invite an Eskimo family and their reindeer to come to Bradford under the auspices of local business concerns for an unusual educational exhibition and to share knowledge of their home so far from this city". Now, years later, the authenticity of the Eskimo family is met with some skepticism (some believe that the Eskimos were actually actors from Hollywood) but in 1927, scam or not, Bradfordians were fascinated with the idea of meeting a real live Eskimo family.*

To our surprise, and delight, a distant reader, Paul Ayotte from Anchorage, Alaska, contacted us in September, and assured us that not only were the Eskimos not Hollywood actors, they were his great-grandparents, and as they say, filled us in with the rest of the story. Portions of his letter appear below:

"I happened upon your website the other day, and was excited to see my great-grandparent's names in one of your articles. It was a reprint of them visiting your city back in 1927. Jim and Trixie Ahkla, Eskimos from the far north. It was good to see that it was a treat for your town back then. But there was a question of their authenticity - they were believed to be actors from Hollywood. Not them - they were the real thing. I am only thirty, but I knew my great-



**Jim, Trixie, Billy and Miles Ahkla**

grandmother Trixie (her English name) well - she passed in 1987; my great-grandfather (Jim Ahkla) passed of a heart attack in 1966; one of her sons, the older one mentioned in the article (my Uncle Billy) passed away when he was a child not long after their 1920s US lower 48 trip. The second son, (only 4 months old when he came with his family) was Uncle Miles; he passed away last year of cancer. Uncle Miles became the first Eskimo Capital police officer in Washington, DC, and was stationed at the White House while Eisenhower was in office; he told me the president liked the smoked salmon that he would bring him, and that they would have long conversations about Alaska's statehood. Uncle Miles then worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, then as President of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and member of the American Indian Congress testifying before Congress on behalf of Alaskan Natives for Alaskan statehood.

(In the 1920s) a business promoter in Youngstown Ohio named Thatcher recruited real live Eskimos and Reindeer for business promotional pageants and Christmas parades. (Picture) a young Eskimo family leaving for the lower 48 on the last steamer of the season (so they couldn't come back even if they wanted to) to be met by Thatcher's employees and to be taken across the US to the eastern United States business districts for the promotional events. *(note from the Landmark - this explains the Ahkla's*

*visit to Bradford).*

Friends, I find articles and websites such as yours neat and entertaining. I was talking to my mother the other day and she said maybe you all would like to know more about the family. Jim and Trixie Ahkla



...changed their last name to Brandon in the 1940s. The School proprietors could not pronounce Eskimo names so changed them. (It) was a common practice among Missionaries and Dept of ED and later BIA schools in the state at the time. Rather than have a random name assigned to his children by the schools; my great grandfather Jim Ahkla changed his last name to Brandon because he was 1/2 breed; a son of a Irish Whaler - Dr. Brandon, a ship doctor, (who) was one of the 5 people that founded the township of Anvil, Anvil being modern day Nome.

James and Trixie Ahkla Brandon had 8 kids, (Five are, and were, war veterans - the oldest, Army - Uncle Miles WWII Pacific campaign; Uncle James and my grandfather Art; both Korean War Marines; Uncle Kay and Uncle John- both Vietnam, Marines; and Uncle Eddie and Aunt Beatrice. *(the child named Billy died shortly after the 1920s trip).*

I don't know if you all would even care about things like this- but there is a pride thing going on with me, and I guess it is a neat thing this Internet- 'where were they then, and now?' kind of a thing. Well, most importantly; thank you for your website, and your time. With the Internet and websites like yours, future generations of my family can enjoy reading about the past. ---Paul Ayotte, Anchorage, Alaska.



Jim and Trixie Ahkla

The Bradford Landmark Society would like to thank Mr. Ayotte for contacting us and telling us the wonderful history of his family. And he's right, you know, the Internet has, and will continue to, link the world together both now and in the future. We also must apologize for thinking that his great-grandparents were Hollywood actors. In these somewhat cynical times, it is hard to imagine the fortitude it must have taken to leave Alaska, travel all over the eastern United States (with two small children and reindeer no less!), and to meet with curious people in unfamiliar settings. I am not sure that many of us would volunteer for such a job!



Jim Ahkla at Waldorf Astoria, 1926

All the reindeer of that trip starved to death as they were traveling through the eastern states. They would not eat the oats or hay the train conductors tried to feed them.

# Holley Motor Company Historic Marker

*On September 13, 2008, the Bradford Landmark Society was proud to dedicate a Pennsylvania State Historic marker commemorating the founding of the Holley Motor Company, here in Bradford, in 1899. Special invited guests including Mayor Tom Red, Councilman Bob Onuffer, Gary Hoy, founder of the Street Dreams Car Club, Street Dreams club members, and interested Bradfordians, all who gathered at Holley Avenue for the dedication of the marker. A shortened version of the dedication speech follows below:*

This marker is just one of forty three markers that have been approved in 2008 by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, and is only the second marker ever to be placed in Bradford. Our first historic marker was erected 2 years ago near the American Refining Group office building on North Kendall Avenue during the refinery's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and it is with pride that we so dedicate another marker in honor of the Holley Motor Company.

The State Marker program in Pennsylvania started in 1946 and since then over 2000 markers have been erected throughout the state. In the late 1970s the guidelines were changed to require "that the person, event or site to be commemorated have had a meaningful impact on its times and be of statewide or national rather than only local significance." The keywords here are "must be of statewide and national significance" and standing here today is proof that the state historical and museum commission felt that the Holley Motor Company held such significance.

It isn't easy to be chosen to receive a Pennsylvania Historic marker. There is a lengthy application process, which must be submitted to the Historic and Museum Commission, which accepts nominations only once a year, in January. The nomination must be submitted in a clear and organized manner, including thorough documentation and verification of the facts claimed. Nominations are reviewed by a panel of independent historical experts from across the state in February, with notification in March. We were notified on March 20.



*Unveiling of the marker by Gary Hoy, left, and Mayor Riel, right*

Holley Motor Company, which is now known as Holley Performance Products, has been the undisputed leader in fuel systems for over 100 years. Holley carburetors power every NASCAR® Sprint® Cup team and every NHRA® Pro-Stock champion performance fuel pumps, fuel injection, intake manifolds, cylinder heads & engine dress-up products for street performance, race and marine applications.

The Holley name is well known in Bradford. Frank Holley built the Holley Hotel in 1900, but it was his sons, George and Earl Holley, who would make the Holley name famous around the world.

In 1903 George and Earl invented a small car, and called it the Holley Motorette, which used a very unique carburetor. By 1906 they had manufactured and sold 600 Motorette cars, all of which were built here in Bradford. It had a modest price of \$550 featuring a 5.5 horsepower single-cylinder engine, tilt steering wheel with lock, and front and rear kerosene lamps. More than 600 Motorettes were sold during the three-year period in which they were built, but only three are still in existence today, one of which is in the lobby of Holley headquarters in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

It is believed that the Motorette car attracted the attention of Henry Ford, who recognized that Holley's innovative carburetor would revolutionize gasoline engine development.

Ford approached the Holley brothers, struck a deal, and within a very short time, Holley carburetors became standard equipment on millions of Model T Fords. In 1907 the Holley brothers moved their factory to Detroit and the first Holley plant in that city was in operation.

The rest, as they say, is history. The Holley Motor Company has changed its name at various times over the last 100 years, but it continued to maintain its high standards of manufacturing as it expanded into the aircraft industry, the US military, and high performance products. It is truly of statewide and national significance.

## Political Poem from over 100 Years Ago

As long as there have been elections, there have been opposing views of those running for office and sometimes, downright distrust of politicians altogether. This poem, written in 1890 and published in the Bradford Era, is one viewpoint that many voters can relate to, especially when they see someone running for office who does not appear to be what he says, in this case the workingman.

"Father, who travels our road so late?"  
"Hush, my child, 'tis the candidate."  
Fit example of human woes,  
early he comes and late he goes.  
He greets the women with courtly grace;  
he kisses the baby's dirty face;  
he calls to the fence the farmer at work,  
he bores the merchant, he bores the clerk.  
The blacksmith, while his anvil rings  
he greets, and this is the song he sings:

*Howdy! Dowdy! How aye do?  
How is your wife and how are you?  
Ah, it fits my fist as no other can,  
The calloused hand of the workingman.*

"Husband! Who is that at the gate?"  
Hide, my love, it's the candidate".  
"Husband!" "Why can't he work like you?"  
"No cash at home and no credit in town,  
too stupid to preach and too proud to beg,  
Too timid to rob and too lazy to dig,  
Then over his horse his leg he flings,  
And to the dear people this song he sings:

*Howdy! Dowdy! How aye do?  
How is your wife and how are you?  
Ah, it fits my fist as no other can,  
The calloused hand of the workingman.*

Brothers who labor early and late  
Ask these things of the candidate.  
What's his record? How does he stand  
at home? No matter about his hand,  
Be it hard, or soft, so it be not prone  
to cross over money not his own.  
Has he in view no thieving plan?  
Is he honest and capable? He's your man!  
Cheer such a man, 'till the welkin ring,  
Join in the chorus, when thus he sings:

*Howdy! Dowdy! How aye do?  
How is your wife and how are you?  
Ah, it fits my fist as no other can,  
The calloused hand of the workingman.*



Our tribute to Halloween. Sing if you like,  
to the tune, *The Addams Family*.

They're creepy and they're kooky,  
Mysterious and spooky,  
They're all together ooky,  
The Landmark Family.

Their house is a museum  
Where people come to see 'em  
They really are a scream  
The Landmark Family.

There's Molly, Mike, and Larry,  
Sally, Tom and Mary,  
They're really kind of scary,  
The Landmark Family.

Neat. Sweet. Petite.

So if you've got a mystery,  
Your family tree, or history,  
There's always facts, not fakery,  
The Landmark Family.