

20 Years from Now

- Paul Kurtz -

When Gideon Fisher paid \$1600 for Nicholas' chest there was a gasp: *So much money for just a wooden chest!* Now many people have looked into the open chest and felt a kinship. That money is not a factor anymore.



The barn is costing so much. Yet even now its intrigue has become a curiosity. News reporters ask, "What does the house mean to you?" Then there was the bicyclist who pulled in to see the house with his children. The children thought it was awesome.

The nearby Tulpehocken Creek is our Old Man River - "He just keeps rolling along." The creek was the same. Some things are the same; some things change. Twenty years from now there will be Stoltzfus descendants. But like the water in the creek, they will change, yet their descendency will be the same. Will they understand what being Amish meant to Nicholas and his family?

How do you feel when you look into the chest in which all of Nicholas' belongings fit in 1766? How do you feel when you walk into the Stoltzfus House, the same doorway Nicholas and his family entered in 1771?

When the Heritage Room is done it will be a place to contemplate meanings. Ben Blank and Abner Beiler will be affirmed *Twenty Years from Now* when today's teenagers bring their young families for Heartage!

right: constructing the Heritage Room



Urgent Need for October: Come Join the Work

- Merle Stoltzfus -

Like walking into a saw mill without the dust and noise; the good smell of fresh cut wood encouraged lively discussion around a table on the barn's main floor. How can we use an 18th century German map to tell the story of our European roots? Would a model of the frigate on which Nicholas came be an effective story tool? Do we use wall panels or movable free standing displays? What computer can deliver 1,000,000 different genealogy charts?

As the museum committee does their work, I felt the pressure to finish the barn. The barn has been raised to an insulated shell structure. There are more opportunities than ever for you to join the work. We need labor and materials in every construction trade from plumbing to paint. And, we need funds to finish. *Continued on page 2.*

In This Edition:

Did you see the new word "heartage" along Route 340 in Intercourse? Read Amy Martin's article, "Why I Am Proud to be a Stoltzfus" to discover what this word means. Before this new word, we only had a limited way to express why we are planning a Heritage Room in the Barn.



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 www.nicholasstoltzfus.com.

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Why I'm Proud to be a Stoltzfus

- Amy Martin -

Growing up with the last name of Martin or Stoltzfus in Lancaster County is a very common and ordinary thing. Therefore, a Stoltzfus marrying a Martin is also a very likely and inevitable occurrence. However, this particular Martin did not think that was going to happen to her!

I've realized that for much of my adult life this far, I've tried to be sure I don't fit the stereotypical "Mennonite from Lancaster County" mold. After earning my master's degree from Shippensburg University in 2008, I have lived and worked in the Harrisburg area for the past three years.

For a while I dated a part-Italian guy with a Presbyterian background and attended a Baptist church. Then I attended an Assemblies of God Church while playing softball for the local Brethren in Christ church and took a job working in the school district of Harrisburg....and despite all of these efforts to differentiate, I found myself back in Lancaster County and engaged to a Stoltzfus with Amish roots.

In July, I got a call from my older brother asking if I could assist the National Geographic Team for a day as a local contact. His wife's cousin works for National Geographic in New York City and was working on a documentary about the Amish. My brother had heard about the barn raising on the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead and contacted him.

Sad to say that before that phone call, I knew nothing about the Homestead or that it even existed. I really wasn't sure what to expect of the day but prepared myself to be slightly bored with periods of nothing to do. I did not expect the crowd of people that the event brought together.

I also knew very little about the name I am inheriting other than the fact that it is as common as my own. Instead, I found myself feeling very at home and proud of my roots and the wonderful heritage I am to gain by becoming a Stoltzfus in a few months.

The day involved the intersection of a diverse group of people. A camera crew from NYC, an Amish barn raising crew, local Mennonites and Amish, some tourists passing through, local news reporters and other miscellaneous bystanders rounded out the group.

Gazing at the scene before me, I noted lots of smiles, talking, listening and standing in awe of the progress of the workmanship unfolding. In the air was a mutual respect for each other and the heritage that had brought so many different people together.

Throughout the course of the day I found myself engaged in conversation with numerous people. We played the "Mennonite game" as various ones tried to figure out which Martin family I come from and to which Stoltzfus clan my fiancée belongs. I learned I am journeying a family of over one million descendants of Nicholas Stoltzfus.

I left the homestead that evening mentally tired but feeling a scene of connection. That is why this project is so important. Learning about our heritage and preserving our history is part of what gives us a sense of connection to one another and to ourselves.

We lived in a world where people increasingly feel disconnected from one another, despite the advances in technology that are supposed to keep us continually connected and "in the loop." We all have ways to be connected but it not on the deeper level that builds a sense of community and togetherness.

I realize now that the further I tried to run from my heritage, the more disconnected I felt and the more I lost my sense of who I am. I am not talking about where I have lived physically, but about my determination to hide my background for fear that others would stereotype me or look at me differently.

I envision the completed homestead project as a place for people to find connection and enjoy being together, while learning about their valuable heritage, for generations to come. For these reasons and many more, I will take on my new name and wear it proudly.

Come Join the Work, continued from page 1.

Have you grasped the opportunity? Have you joined the family in the Work? It is our goal to present and encourage this opportunity to as many family members as possible in finishing our barn campaign. If you can't work, send a donation to help. Send \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 dollars by mail. Or, give online by going to www.nicholasstoltzfus.com and "click to donate" on the left side of the page. By giving, express to the NSH Committee your appreciation of their leadership in preserving your heritage in honor to your parents and for the education of future generations. Come, join the work; together, we will complete it.



Barn Raising

Pictures from the barn raising on July 27.

What Would Abner Beiler Say?

- Sam Stoltzfus -

Yes, what would the main Amish historian Abner Beiler say about the Nicholas Stoltzfus Barn project if he were alive in August, 2011? Without a doubt Abner would be pleased to no end if he could see the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homstead so well kept and a 36 x 46, 2-story barn standing there complete with a stable area, two large haymows, and a threshing floor!

Abner was born in 1917, married in 1940, and soon began collecting historical books and data. By 1970, he had a small room in his barn to house the collection of old Bibles, directories, maps, and several file cabinets of his research projects.

Back in the 1980s, Abner focused on Berks County Amish history. He and Amos Fisher, Levi A. Stoltzfus, Joe Beiler, and Harvey Yoder made trips to Berks County, checked out court house records, found old Amish home sites and cemeteries. They proved many old writings wrong.

Back in 1998, Abner and others began efforts to raise funds to restore the Nicholas Stoltzfus House. The Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee was formed, headed by Pam Shenk and Christ P. Stoltzfus. They held several fundraising dinners at Shady Maple. They held an annual spring auction. Slowly funds came trickling in. Abner was pleased at the response. As the new century dawned, they began to restore the Nicholas Stoltzfus House.

The stone walls were pointed, new shingles put on, and windows repaired. Abner died in September 2002, but his wishes carried on. Abner's spirit of preserving and recording Berks County history is through. This new barn, although it is just stone and wood, is planned to be a showcase of Berks County Amish history, keeping the spirit of preserving history to future generations.

Abner would be pleased to see how well the barn was built in 17th century architecture. Massive timbers, stone walls, and wood siding are all in proper homestead settings. Abner would be pleased to see all the space inside to display artifacts and old Berks historical items. If Abner were still here, he no doubt would have many ideas and directions to display Berks County history. Abner could have said, as Benjamin L. Blank wrote, "To the generations yet to unborn who will have new problems to solve and have an inherent right to the privilege of looking back to an ancestry that has been true to man and true to God."

Abner and his family honored the same God, and Abner would be just as concerned that the house display history of the early Berks County Amish churches, the ministers, and the bishops that lived there. These were the first Amish districts in America. Through their devotion the order of worshipping God was established for all the Amish in America.

See "Come Join the Work" on page 1

Stone facing

Urgent Need for October

To volunteer your help on a Saturday, please call Dave Esh at 951-0166 or Paul Kurtz at 808-7785.



Get these stones....

...on here...

...to look like this!

If you would like more information or are interested in donating, please contact Paul Kurtz by email at psku04@ptd.net or by phone at 717-808-7785. You can mail contribution to Vivian Beiler, Treasurer, 243 W. Fulton Street, New Holland, PA 17557 (write checks out to NSHPC), or you can donate online by visiting www.nicholasstoltzfus.com.

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