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#### Land Acknowledgement

It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking, and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.



The WHM Collection includes a number of reproduction and original primers, among them McGuffey's popular "readers." Above, resources are displayed in our Children's Room.

### Primers: How Williamstown Learned to Read

By Effie Skinner

*The WHM's next temporary exhibit, "Children and Schools in Williamstown through the years," will open in the beginning of December. Read below for a preview of one of the displays. Effie Skinner is a junior at Mount Greylock Regional High School with an interest in history, who volunteers at the museum.*

Primers were schoolbooks that mainly aimed to teach children how to read, used widely until the mid-20th century. Many primers included short stories accompanied by illustrations. The stories for each primer would differ by reading level. The *We Look and See* reader contained large printed words and large pictures for children just beginning to read, while higher reading levels had more words and fewer pictures. *Days and Deeds*, a primer published in 1948 and utilized by Williamstown Public Schools, contained stories that fit into categories such as "Young Citizens of Today" and "Moving Westward." There were even short biographies about famous Americans such as Ben Franklin and Amelia Earhart. Students could also enjoy reading tales of the Golden Touch and Aladdin.

Many primers featured lists of vocabulary for students to learn. *Sander's Union Speller*, published in 1879, contained lists focused on teaching English orthography and orthoëpy, or spelling and pronunciation, with "exercises in synonyms, in opposites, in analysis, and in formal definition." While *Sander's Union Speller* did not have any stories to accompany the vocabulary, *McGuffey's Eclectic Reader* would define new vocabulary words that would be included in a short story.

*Primers continued on page 4*

## President's Remarks

The Museum is coming to the end of a busy summer-fall season, in which we featured both a return of our annual Hay Day and the "Sliding Baseball Across Williamstown" exhibit. We are grateful to Larry Moore, Baseball in the Berkshires, for preparing and mounting the display. You can read more about it, and our October 16 gathering of local heroes and friends, in this issue. The event had excellent coverage in the Berkshire Eagle by popular sports columnist Howard Herman, who attended.



Linda Conway

More than 300 people, young and older, enjoyed Hay Day on August 15, when we were blessed with sunshine for the third time in a row — the pictures in these pages tell the story. Hearty thanks to Chair Patrick Quinn, his subcommittees, and all who volunteered. In time for the year-end holidays our next exhibit will be "Children and Schools in Williamstown Through the Years." Stay tuned!

As usual we have planned a full schedule of Saturday morning lectures and plan to hold some of them, at least, in person. We hope to highlight the season with a barn raising in the late spring. Repairs have been made to the structural parts of the Dolan-Jenks barn, which was disassembled last spring.

As we move further into a new season the board is committed to concentrating on diversity and inclusion as we add new members and plan our Saturday morning programs. November is Native American Heritage Month and we are seeking input from the Stockbridge-Munsee Band as we review our Native American exhibit. Please visit our online collection of objects representing the earliest settlers of what is now Williamstown.

Best regards and good health to you and your families for the holidays and the new year. Think about gifting a neighbor or friend with a Williamstown Historical Museum membership (see page 7)!



## Winter Hours

*As of November 1:*

**Fridays and Saturdays, 10-2**

*Or by appointment: contact 413-438-2160 or  
info@williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org*

## Mission and Supporting Statements

**The purpose of the Williamstown Historical Museum is to promote interest in the history of the Williamstown area by collecting, cataloging, and preserving items of historical significance, and to increase the public's knowledge of Williamstown's past through educational exhibits, programs, events, research, publications, and any other functions which further this purpose. The Williamstown Historical Museum is committed to collecting and sharing the stories of all of the residents of this area across the centuries.**

## The WHM Collection

The museum's collection consists of items dating from early history in the region through the present day, and the collection is always growing. The museum encourages all residents and museum members to share their stories, make suggestions about areas of research and program presentation, and participate in the museum's activities so a broader understanding of the history of Williamstown can be gained and shared. The museum needs your help to ensure that everyone is represented. Please contribute to the diversity of the collection by sharing your story, your thoughts, and artifacts related to the town's history. Thank you for your investment in your town.



# HAY DAY FAIR

August 15,  
2021

## A Recap



Hay Day featured wonderful live music by Rosin the Beaux, above, and Accordionist Al Bedini.



The Williamstown Garden Club and numerous other organizations added to the festive atmosphere with their presence.



Hay Day was made possible by the volunteers who helped in setting up, breaking down, and running tables. Above: Grant Sun and John Quinn hang decorations.



Above: Hay Day Chair Patrick Quinn organized popular children's races and was a notable presence with his bullhorn throughout the day.

Right: A petting zoo and pony rides from Mountain Top Zoo in Stamford, Vermont were big attractions for our younger visitors.



Food options included a hot dog stand offered for the first time and run by Paul Boyer and Mike Goodwin, a bake sale run by Dave and Darcy Westall, and popcorn and lemonade stands.

Right: The Silent Auction subcommittee, including Cynthia Payne, and Carole Dolan, pictured, organized a lively auction with dozens of items offered.



### *Primers, continued from page 1*

Most primers were written in print. However, several would contain pages dedicated to the cursive alphabet. *Apleton's Second Reader* contained sections where students were required to read individual words and passages written in cursive. Some other primers would briefly describe the cursive alphabet.

*The Plan Book* described the content teachers should use for their students. While much of it emphasized learning about history and "people of other lands" it also included sheet music for various songs. The songs were often about things discussed by teachers, which would be seasonally relevant -- "Grasshopper's Croquet" for September and "Thanksgiving Day" for November. This book also talked a lot about nature and science, as many pages are devoted to insects and edible plants.

*Recitations for Boys and Girls* contained many recitations for students to perform in class as different characters. It also included songs, as well as memory selections made up of quotes from different people.

Other books were dedicated to history. *Children In*



An illustration from the 20th century *Look and See* basic reader

*History* by Molly Harrison gave children a description of the lives of children in the nineteenth century from clothing to the industrial revolution. It was accompanied by black and white illustrations. Like many other textbooks and primers written in the 19th and 20th centuries, it pictured children the same age as those who would read the book, which would have made it more relatable and engaging for students.

## In Memory of Edith Schwartz

*Board Member Pat Greenberg*

The Museum has lost a good friend. Edith Schwartz was a volunteer at the Williamstown Historical Museum. Her specialty was cataloguing donations to the Museum. Donations of historical material are sorted and catalogued to be added to the Museum's collection as reference and research material. Wednesday was the day Sarah Currie, Edith, and I met at the Museum. Edith and Sarah discussed cataloguing; I discussed Membership matters. During the time of the Pandemic, Wednesdays became a time of fast friendship and a time of comfort for the three of us. Edith loved working at the Museum. Her quiet, thoughtful presence is missed by all.

*Former Executive Director Sarah Currie*

When Edith Schwartz began her volunteer work at the WHM in 2016, I was sure she would be an asset because of her experience working with collections, but I did not expect to have the good fortune to connect with Edith as a friend. I am lucky to have spent hours with Edith, chatting about our lives, swapping stories, a little gossip, and getting to know each other. She was funny, humble, kind, and pragmatic in her approach to life; all qualities I loved in her. She rose to challenges and faced them with humor and a sensibility that was admirable. She loved her family and shared sweet stories of them and she always provided excellent advice when I talked to her about my children. I also loved her sense of style - so trendy, but sophisticated! I miss Edith, as I know her family and friends around town and afar do, and I am grateful for the brief time we spent together.



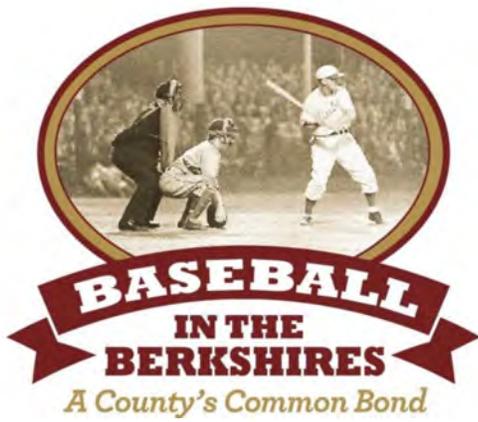
Edith Schwartz prepares material for cataloguing in 2018.

## Can You Help?

A small museum traditionally operates with minimal paid staffing and the help of an active team of volunteers. The Historical Museum is grateful for the hours donated by Edith Schwartz and many others over the years since our founding in 1941. At the moment our ranks have thinned and we need your help! If you have two or more hours a month to spend at the Museum we can use assistance with the following:

- Greet visitors on Fridays and Saturdays, 10-2. Introduce them to our permanent exhibit and answer questions to the best of your ability.
- Work with the Director to catalog items donated to the Museum.
- Serve on Committees ranging from communications to fundraising to events planning.

Please contact Museum Administrator Kendall McGowan at [kendall@williamstownhistoricalmuseum](mailto:kendall@williamstownhistoricalmuseum) or 413-458-2160 if you would like more information.



AT THE WILLIAMSTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
OCTOBER 16, 2021

## “Sliding Baseball Across Williamstown”

By Carole Dolan

The culmination of this long-running exhibit was a celebratory event on Saturday, October 16. An audience of more than 40 people enjoyed hearing first-hand stories of professional baseball experiences from former Williamstown baseball players: Jonah Bayliss, Ryan Cameron and Patrick Kelley (Photo 1). Tony Plansky (2, pictured right), son of the All-American and Williams College coach from 1931 to 1976, delighted everyone with remembrances of his father, Anthony G. Plansky, who lived on Southworth Street. For those who didn't know him, he was called the “Greatest College Athlete of All Time” by Lou Little, the famed Columbia football coach.

Baseball fans were excited to see Babe Ruth's hat, which was given to Tony Plansky, Sr. by Babe Ruth himself, and subsequently handed down to Tony Jr. for all at our event to enjoy (3).

Our thanks go out to all participants for their contributions to this popular exhibit and program, and to the many visitors to the exhibit who shared their personal memories of baseball in Williamstown. The exhibit's end fittingly coincided with this year's World Series. Williamstown's own [Chris Conroy](#) was selected to be the home plate umpire for Game 1.

The museum is grateful to Larry Moore (4, on far left) for his research and expertise as a director and founding member of the Baseball in the Berkshires organization, and especially for sharing this collection of baseball history with the WHM.

The players' stories were emotional, at times. Jonah Bayliss (5) said baseball enabled him to travel to places he never thought he'd see. Jonah played with a Japanese professional baseball team. All players stated they were awed and humbled to be speaking alongside pictures of Billy Hart and Frank Grant!



1



2

3



4



5

The Williamstown Historical Museum presents...

## Down Memory Lane: Looking Back at the Early Years of the Clark Art Institute

A tour of the original Clark building by Jock Brooks, Saturday, December 11 at 11 a.m.

The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute opened to the public in 1955 and delighted the few museum goers who visited it back then. What was it like to view this new museum and experience its ambiance and art in the 1960s and '70s? Walk with us through those early years, recreated by Jock Brooks, former Associate Director, who came to the institute in 1968 from the National Gallery of Art, and his wife Jytte, who served as a docent for over 25 years. We will re-experience the Clark's original physical layout, a taste of its collection of art acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark, and remember some of its modest public activities as we walk back the years.

### Please Note

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required; masks must be worn.

The tour is free, but the Clark's admission fee is necessary. Those without a membership will have admission covered as needed.



### To register:

Contact Patrick Quinn, 413-458-6141 or [quinnsun8@gmail.com](mailto:quinnsun8@gmail.com)

Deadline is December 8.

Registration is required, with a maximum of 12 participants.

If more than 12 register, a second session will be offered, date to be determined.

## Williamstown Resident Marc Jaffe Turned 100 on November 6

The *Berkshire Eagle* recently published a profile by reporter Felix Carroll on Marc Jaffe, a Williamstown resident for over 30 years. The article is available online (and is excerpted below).

Marcus H. Jaffe was born in Philadelphia in 1921.

Turns out one of the few people to ever call him "Marcus" would be the President of the United States, in that Bronze Star citation, and his old pal Gore Vidal, who simply liked the Latin ring to "Marcus."

He was "Marc" to everyone else, through the Great Depression, through World War II, through a celebrated career during the so-called "golden age" of paperback publishing, to the present day in which he still edits books and still shows up for Veterans Day remembrances in his adopted town of Williamstown, where he's lived since 1989.



**Marc Jaffe pictured in his Williamstown home.  
Photo by Felix Carroll, Berkshire Eagle.**

Marc is a member of the Williamstown American Legion Post 152, which established and supports an extensive exhibit at the WHM (our Veterans Room). All are invited to visit the museum, as well as to visit the Veterans Circle at Eastlawn Cemetery and the Field Park Wall, listing Williamstown veterans by the conflicts in which they served.

## Upcoming events

Sunday, December 5, 12 - 2 p.m.

### Opening of New Temporary Exhibit

The WHM's next temporary exhibit is entitled "Children and Schools in Williamstown Through the Years." It will feature intricate dollhouses made by former Williamstown resident Lynn Laitman, along with informational displays (see page 1) and interactive activities. Join us at this reception and visit throughout the winter!

Saturday, December 11, 11 a.m.

### Jock Brooks' Tour of the Original Clark

WHM volunteer and former Associate Director of The Clark Jock Brooks will lead a historical tour of the Museum's original building. See page 6 for more information.

Saturday, February 26, 11 a.m.

### Lecture on Shirley Chisholm

Shirley Chisholm was a politician, educator, and author, and was the first Black woman elected to Congress. Join us at the Milne Library for a talk on her life delivered by Barbara Winslow, professor emerita at Brooklyn College, author of *Shirley Chisholm: Catalyst for Change*, and part-time Williamstown resident.

March 2022

### Panel on the History of the Green River Grange

The current owner of the Grange building and members of the local Grange organization will discuss its past and future.

April 2022

Moderated panel discussion: "What is History?"

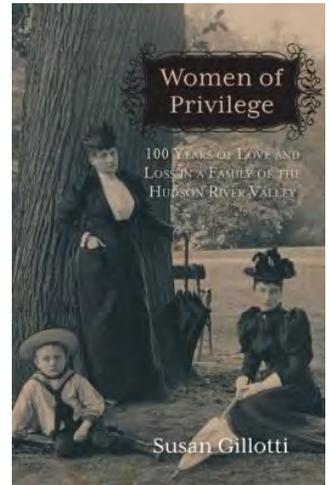
Summer 2022

[Historic Barn Reconstruction](#) and Celebration

## Join WHM's History Book Group!

Have you read a good book lately? Would you recommend it to a history book group? Would you like to learn about other good history books? Please join the Williamstown Historical Museum's gathering of friendly readers who meet for discussion about books with historical themes on the second Thursday of each month from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

On December 9, 2021 the group will discuss *Women of Privilege: 100 Years of Love and Loss in a Family of the Hudson River Valley* by Susan Gillotti. We will meet via Zoom and the link can be accessed [via the WHM website](#).



The group welcomes new participants to share observations and ideas, and all are invited to attend even if they have not read the book!

## Digital Research Resources Available at the WHM!



Visit the Williamstown Historical Museum to access digital research resources including Newspapers.com. Staff and greeters are available to get you started on your research today!

You may also access our collection online by visiting [www.williamstown.pastperfectonline.com](http://www.williamstown.pastperfectonline.com).

Williamstown  
Historical  
Museum

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To Join or Make a Donation Online:

[www.williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org](http://www.williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org)

# Station Mill: Then and Now



The textile mill known as Station Mill, built in 1865 by the Williamstown Manufacturing Company, had several uses. The last was by Photech Imaging, which ceased operating there in 1989. Unused since then, the property is now home to The Cole Avenue Apartments, consisting of town houses and also apartments, located in “The Cube.” The complex contains 12 units of affordable housing and makes an important contribution to Williamstown’s overall housing needs.



Read more about the history of this site in the Fall 2020 issue of our newsletter, [available online!](#)

## Do you recognize this recent acquisition?



One of the latest additions to the WHM Collection is this 29x20” metal sign, recovered by Williamstown Facilities Supervisor Ken McAlpine just before being thrown out at the town DPW. Can you help us answer any of the following questions?

- Where was this sign (and the schoolhouse) originally located?
- How did it get to the DPW to be discarded?

An article about Williamstown’s later school- and meetinghouses is available in our [Winter 2021 newsletter](#) (see page 6).

Please write [info@williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org](mailto:info@williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org) or call 413-458-2160 with any information!