

Spring 2021

Historical Journal



LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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Dr. Herbert Beck — Scientist, Historian, Educator

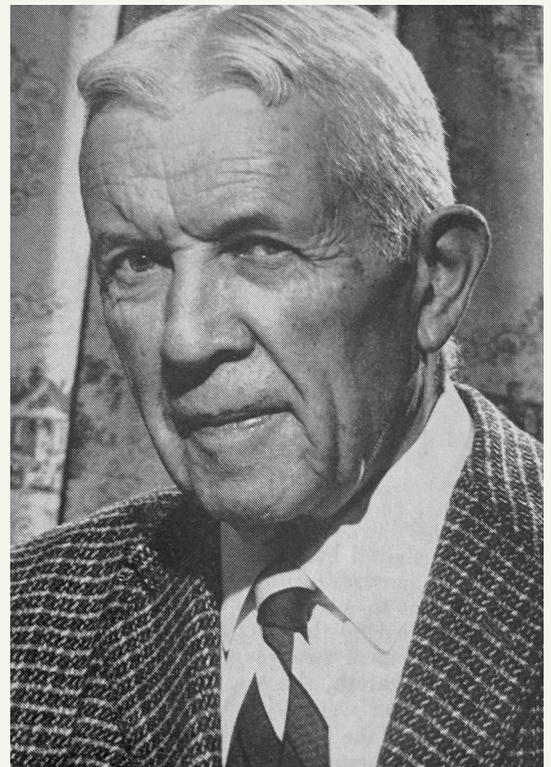
By Charlene Van Brookhoven

It would be extremely difficult to find a man more actively involved in both intellectual and hands-on activities than Dr. Herbert Beck. Herbert Huebner Beck, born in 1875, was the son of Abraham R. Beck, founder and teacher of Audubon School for Boys, and Johanna Huebner Beck. Dr. Beck was schooled at The Beck Academy for Boys founded by his grandfather John Beck. As a young boy, Herbert was introduced to all aspects of diverse teachings at his grandfather's school. He attended Bethlehem Preparatory School (then Lehigh University) where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. This schooling enticed him to pursue many interests.

In 1901 Herbert Beck became a professor of chemistry and mineralogy at Franklin & Marshall College where he received his Doctor of Science Degree in 1936. During these years he also taught geology and ornithology at F&M where he led countless field trips to explore the natural world of Lancaster County. These teachings led to three publications on his field research. In 1912, *The Minerals of Lancaster County*; in 1920, *The Occult Senses in Birds*; and in 1924, *A Chapter on the Ornithology of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with Supplemental Notes on the Mammals*.

It was during his field observations in 1910 that he was fortunate to witness a flock of 150 passenger pigeons, the last to fly over Lancaster County. For three years, (from 1909-1912), Dr. Beck was the baseball coach at F&M. Also during those years he played the violin for the college club quartet. From 1929 until 1946, he taught horsemanship at Linden Hall School for Girls in Lititz. As an accomplished equestrian, he participated in many fox hunts organized in Lancaster County.

One of his most notable services to Lancaster County was serving 25 years as president of The Lancaster County Historical Society. During his tenure, Beck was responsible for the placement of 30 historical markers throughout Lancaster city and county.



Above: Herbert H. Beck. Story concludes on page 3 inside.

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We Open for the Season April 30th!

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We begin our season on April 30th! Beginning that day, the Lititz Museum, Gift Shop, and tours of our 1792 Johannes Mueller House will be open for business.

Come visit us and learn about the rich history of Lititz, Pennsylvania!

Hours of Operation:

Friday and Saturday: 11am-5pm. Beginning Memorial Day: Monday through Saturday, 11am-5pm. Timeds tours "on the :15" will be available.

Due to COVID-19, we will be following all CDC guidelines, including masks, social distancing and socially-distanced tours, one-way arrow tape on the floors, and hand sanitizer.

Congrats, Kristin!

Congratulations to Kristin Wenger, who has been selected as a speaker for the National Genealogical Society (NGS) 2021 Conference! The topic of her presentation will be "Mennonite and Brethren Research: Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Beyond." Here at LHF, Kristin serves as a tour guide as well as our in-house genealogist.

For more information, visit this link: <https://www.rootsandwingsresearch.com/post/ngs-2021-speaker>

MENNONITE & BRETHREN RESEARCH

Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Beyond

Kristin Wenger, Roots & Wings Research
NGS Conference 2021



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Our Annual Plant Exchange is May 2nd

The Lititz Historical Foundation in conjunction with the Lititz Garden Club will hold its Annual Plant Exchange on Sunday, May 2nd at 1:30 PM. The event will be held in the Mary Oehme Gardens, behind the museum buildings at 137-145 East Main Street in Lititz. The event is rain or shine.

Attendees are asked to please wear masks, as well as social distance while on the grounds. The plants to exchange must be perennials and must have identification tags for each plant. Each plant must be placed in a container for transportation.

Upon arrival, a ticket will be handed out for each plant. The plants must be placed in categories including: Sun, Shade, Exotic, Bulbs, Herbs and Ground Cover. These tickets can be redeemed for another plant after all plants are placed in the categories and the attendees have some time to explore the categories.



Dr. Herbert Beck — Scientist, Historian, Educator Con't:

He wrote the inscriptions of two thirds of these markers. Numerous articles on the history of Lancaster County were researched and penned for inclusion in The Journal of LCHS while he was an active member.

Being a life long member of The Lititz Moravian Church, music became a large part of his life. Dr. Beck was a member of the Moravian trombone choir as well as the church orchestra. He was skilled as a brass and string player. He was Concertmaster of The Lancaster Symphony Orchestra and held the first chair in the viola section. During these years he was the church's historian and shared Moravian customs and traditions for inclusion in many newspapers and magazines.

During a visit to Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Dr. Beck noticed the American flag was not flying 24 hours a day. He approached the National Park Service requesting a light shine on the stars and stripes and was successful with his request. He was presented a key to the City of Baltimore by the mayor for his efforts.

Dr. Herbert Beck was an extraordinary man born into the well known Beck family of educators in the Moravian community of Lititz. He died in December of 1960 and is buried in the Lititz Moravian cemetery.



Right: A young Herbert Beck

*Sister Cisterns**By Cory Van Brookhoven*

Lititz is filled with countless history.

From our early Moravian roots to America's first pretzel bakery to being named America's Coolest Small Town in 2013, the borough is clearly like no other not just in Lancaster County, not just in Pennsylvania, but throughout the entire United States.

When the 1792 Johannes Mueller House was being renovated in 1964, a smokehouse was discovered which had been boarded up for generations. Nearly thirty years later, another interesting find on that property surprised workers in 1990 – it was a cistern, which for decades laid undetected underneath the former stone back porch of the house.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, a cistern provided an easy and free way to collect rainwater which could then be used for cooking or bathing. The cistern that was found on the Mueller House property was lined at the bottom with bricks, and most likely made of clay. After the back porch was repaired and portions of it replaced, it was once again covered up in order to maintain its integrity for another several hundred years.

Although this can no longer be seen, there is a second one right next door, in the back kitchen portion of the Lititz Museum. Once the home of Christian Schropp, the structure, which was built in 1793, was constructed one year after Mueller's home was erected. This shows how many families relied on this means to collect water during the 1700s.

Today, the cistern in the Lititz Museum is preserved and covered with Plexi glass, and visitors of all ages can safely peer down to the bottom. The next time you visit the Lititz Museum, be sure to check out this very interesting piece of history from years gone by.



Above: The cistern discovered on the property of the historic 1792 Johannes Mueller House in May, 1990.

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Our 58th Annual Antiques Show is June 25-26 - New Location!



Our 58th Annual show will be held at the Lititz Rec Center June 25-26th, 2021.

Admission will be \$10. This traditional country show is always a favorite. Save the date, and check out more details in our next issue.

Thank you, Ruth

It is with much sadness to share with LHF members the passing of Ruth Y. Spacht, a long-time member and advocate for the The Lititz Historical Foundation.

Ruth came on board in the early years of interested Lititz residents with the goal of collecting memorabilia to open a museum dedicated to the town's history. Ruth (Steely) Spacht was a life-long resident of Lititz and married Bill Spacht, a native son of the founder and owner of Spacht Funeral Home and Furniture Store.

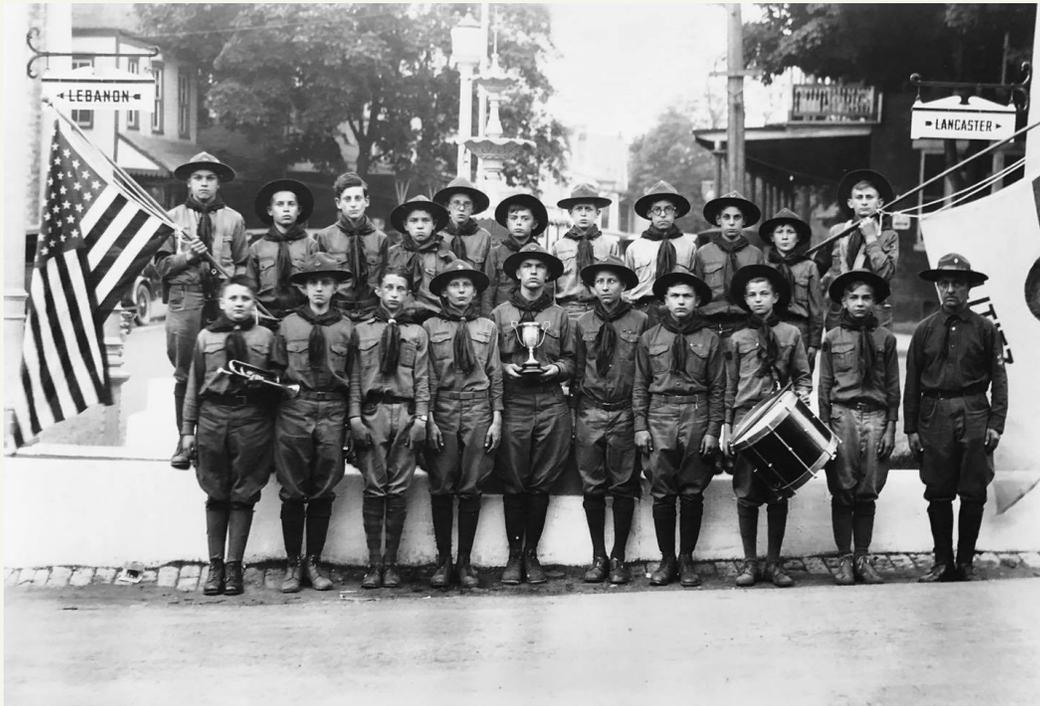
She dug right in, in 1988, with the responsibility of chairing the revolving display exhibit with items relating to all things Lititz. In 1989 she chaired the baked goods and cash donations at the Lititz Antique Show. She continued this role for the next 25 years and was instrumental in bringing thousands of dollars back to LHF.

She was a member of the board of directors where her expertise in the maintaining of the museum buildings was significant. It was Ruth's influence to acquire 300 historical fans from the family of Dorothy Habecker also a Lititz native. One of the fans was owned and used by Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. Ruth also was always willing to sit inside the door of the museum greeting the many visitors from all over the world and sharing how wonderful it was to grow up in her beloved town.



Thank you to Ruth Spacht for the many, many years she put The Lititz Historical Foundation at the top of her priority list. We will miss you.

DID YOU KNOW...?



In 1928, this Boy Scout troop posed for this photograph at the square in Lititz. The cup which is held by the boy in the center in the front was won in nearby New Holland, when the troop won best band in our town's community parade that year.

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