



*knee-deep in history*

# The Scribe

July 2019

Palmerton Area Historical Society  
*Palmerton, Pennsylvania proudly listed on the  
National Register of Historic Places*

## **The Mansion on the Hill – A Focal Point on Visits to Palmerton**

Each year hundreds of Appalachian Trail hikers break their journey as they arrive at Lehigh Gap after burning an average of 5,000 calories a day. Whether they are going north or south, Palmerton has become to them a welcome respite for food, shoes, equipment repairs, band-aids and more. Many, such as the young New Zealander who recently stopped at the Heritage Center on the way back to the Trail, are taking six months to complete the 2000-mile journey from Georgia to Maine.

As they approach Palmerton from the Trail, the hikers gaze up at the remarkable structure that overlooks the Lehigh River Gap. The Marshall Mansion elicits many questions and after almost 150 years it is still the source of fact and fiction. Many articles have been written and many speakers have presented their views on

the “Mansion on the Hill.” The following is a brief history of the man and the home he built.

Elisha Marshall (1829-83) was born in Seneca Falls near Rochester, NY and graduated in 1850 as a second lieutenant from the United States Military Academy at West Point. During the next ten years he served in numerous campaigns in the Country’s western territories, but it was not until the Civil War that he truly distinguished himself. As a colonel, he was given charge of the 13th New York Volunteer Infantry and he commanded with great discipline. His less than personable manner was overlooked by his troops who respected him for his even-handedness.



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*Aerial view of  
restored mansion*

*copyright 2018  
Jay’s Photography*

# **Palmerton Area Historical Society**

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(610) 824-6954

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## **A GREAT SUMMER LINEUP!**

The summer doldrums generally hit from the end of school to Labor Day, but the Historical Society provides many events to fill those hours when we find ourselves answering the question “What do you want to do?” with the reply “I don’t know – what do you want to do?”

The Society also encourages you to visit the Heritage Center at 410 Delaware Avenue to view the wonderful exhibit on the history of Palmerton Hospital. Also...

## **Thursday Evenings at the Kibler School 6495 Pohopoco Drive – Lehighton**

### **July 11 at 7PM**

Barry Reed, nature columnist for The Times News will show photos and discuss the habitats and behaviors of reptiles and amphibians of Carbon County

### **July 18 at 7PM**

Jim Vogt, President of the Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy, will explain how the health of a creek is measured and what you can do to monitor the level of pollution.

### **July 25 at 7PM**

Pennsylvania Dutch Cuisine - The very mention makes your mouth water. Inge Foster and Kay Gilbert will discuss recipes and provide samples of distinctive Dutch treats such as shoofly pie!

## The Mansion on the Hill –

~ *continued from front page* ~

Marshall and his regiment fought well at the Second Battle of Bull Run even though it was a crushing defeat for the Union. His performance there and later that year at Fredericksburg solidified his reputation. He was seriously wounded in the latter battle and spent a year in recovery. Marshall returned in January 1864 to lead the 14th New York Heavy Artillery Regiment and fought in General Grant's fiercely contested Battle of the Wilderness. He was later wounded and captured at the battle for the vital city of Petersburg, Virginia. This ten-month siege ended in April 1865 and convinced General Lee to surrender his Army. Following an exchange of prisoners, Marshall was brevetted a Brigadier General to honor "his gallant and meritorious service."

The facts on Marshall's arrival in the Lehigh Gap, his marriages, and his brief stay in the mansion that bears his name are less clear. His first wife, Hannah, whom he married in 1863, died ten years later at

the age of 29. She had two children with Elisha both of whom died in infancy. Two years later, on September 25, 1875, the *Rochester Union and Advertiser* reported his marriage to Jennie (Janet) Rutherford of a wealthy Rutherford, New Jersey family.

Although the marriage to Miss Rutherford was to be short-lived, it may have provided the link between eastern Pennsylvania and upstate New York. Apparently smitten with the view of the pristine gap and the surrounding mountain sides, Marshall purchased "Eddy's Hill" in 1879 and engaged the services of four area carpenters – Alex Beers, Paul Snyder, Charles Prutzman, and John Boyer – to build his new home. It was completed in 1881 – reportedly

a marvel of expert craftsmanship. Shortly thereafter, a smaller and more modest residence was built nearby to house a caretaker and servants.



*Mansion showing its age in 1957  
courtesy of Hlasney Studio*

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## The Mansion

~ continued from

Marshall's time on the hill that now bears his name was brief. The marriage was apparently not working well (perhaps his budget on an Army pension was being strained) and less than 18 months after the home was completed he sold it to his father-in-law James Rutherford. Within months after the sale, Marshall passed away on August 3, 1883 and his remains were interred with those of his first wife in the family plot in Rochester, NY.



*Elisha Gaylord Marshall, Brig. General US Army*

James Rutherford deeded the property to his daughter Janet in 1890 and she lived in the home (allegedly as somewhat of a recluse) until shortly before her death at age 67 in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1911. Her estate was reported at the time to have been valued at over one million

dollars, much of it stocks and bonds. She bequeathed the "Marshall" property to her brother Henry and following Henry's death, the mansion was sold in 1916 to Jacob Mooney. It eventually fell into a state of disrepair and young imaginations cobbled up stories of mystery and intrigue.



*The mansion looked b*

In 1959, it was purchased by Lester Kern, a Palmerton contractor, who remodeled the caretaker's home for himself and his family. In a 1967 interview, Kern said "I haven't made up my mind yet about the mansion. I don't intend to tear it down. There is too much superior work in this building to warrant its destruction." Instead, nature and vandals took their toll over the next two decades.

In 1986, Dr. William Gordon, a Drexel University professor, and his wife purchased the 14 room Victorian mansion and engaged The Service Team Home Center to bring it back to life.



# on the Hill – om page one ~



beyond repair in 1986

The crew worked to save as much of the original character of the building while installing 51 new windows and replacing the worn and rotted clapboard. Although the work would not meet rigorous standards

photograph taken by Jay's Aerial Photography and has added postcards of this image to the items that are available at the Heritage Center. You may not be able to visit the mansion up close, but now you can have a bird's-eye view.

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*With thanks to Gail Maholick and Times News, The Morning Call, The Service Team, Dick Hoban of Lansford, Dennis Smith and the Palmerton Telephone Company, the Palmerton Library and Mary Kocher, and the late Donald Hunter of Palmerton who provided an article by Rochester, NY historian Jeff Dolan.*

for an historical restoration, it did achieve national recognition in 1988 when “before and after” photographs showed the dramatic transformation.

The Marshall Mansion is becoming of an air of mystery. It sits perched high above Route 248 and is not accessible to visitors. Its haunting image is almost as iconic as that of the Palmerton Bandstand in the Park. It has been 140 years since construction began - almost twenty years prior to the arrival of The New Jersey Zinc Company. It has seen the ravages of time, but thanks to the vision of its current owners it has been spared for future generations.

The Palmerton Area Historical Society acquired the reproduction rights to the magnificent



*A favorite view of artists and photographers  
courtesy of Mary Kocher*

## **2019 Monthly Program Schedule**

*All programs are handicapped accessible*

*Programs are generally held in the Knight's Gallery of Palmerton Library at 7pm unless otherwise noted*

**July 8, 2019**

### ***Tour of the Kibler School***

6495 Pohopoco Drive, Lehighon, PA

Light Refreshments

6:30pm

**August 12, 2019**

### ***Annual Picnic***

Bert Holczman's Estate

Ashfield, PA

**September 6-8, 2019**

### ***Palmerton Community Festival***

**October 14, 2019**

### ***Strange, Odd & Wonderful Tombstones***

Tammy Schane

Little White Church

**November 11, 2019**

### ***The Slatington Slate Industry***

David Altrichter

**December 1, 2019**

### ***Ecumenical Service***

*3pm at Little White Church*

### ***Christmas Party***

*4:30pm at Bert's Steakhouse*

## **Palmerton Area Historical Society Items for Sale**

PAHS offers shopping by mail for those unable to visit the Heritage Center. Items include postcards, photographs, books and a historical throw, among other items.

We also have special items, including all-silk Horsehead Industries ties featuring the NJZ logo, a Christmas ornament commemorating the town's Veterans Memorial, souvenir mugs of Palmerton and other items.

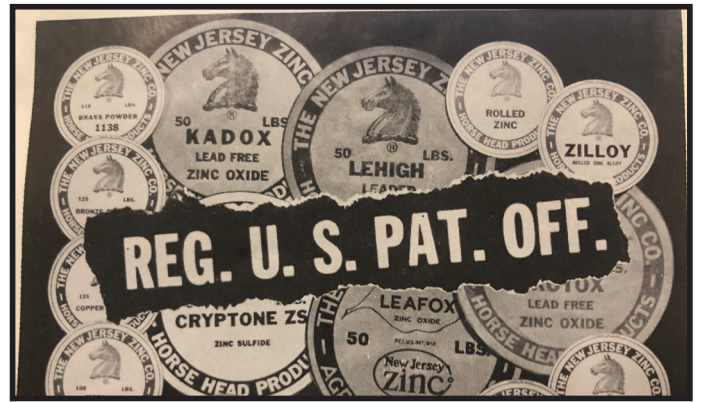
Contact the Heritage Center at (610) 824-6954 for prices or stop by and see all the items available for purchase!

## When is a “kleenex” not a Kleenex®?

When it is a “tissue” made by a company other than Kimberly-Clark! This company zealously guards its logo and its brand name because over time the word (in lower case) may become so common that it may lose its trademark protection. A recent New York Times article pointed to a number of familiar words – escalator, zipper, dumpster, trampoline, and aspirin – that were trademarks of products so successful that they lost the distinction of being produced by a single company.

No company would want a competitor to supply an inferior or lower cost product with an inappropriate use of its protected trademark. Clorox, Xerox, Coca-Cola, are just a few of the companies that are constantly on the alert for trademark infringement. The New Jersey Zinc Company had literally dozens of registered trademarks that were invaluable because they conveyed an assurance of high standards of production to all who used products with the familiar Horse Head logo.

An example of the recent loss of trademark centered on a NJZ alloy. Early examples of products die cast in zinc were notorious for “creep” and “fracture.” In the 1920’s, the NJZ Research Department determined that the addition to zinc of defined amounts of aluminum, magnesium, and copper created an alloy that eliminated these problems and they



promptly registered their discovery under the name ZAMAK. For sixty years NJZ protected its rights to the ZAMAK name until zinc metal production ceased in Palmerton and the Company chose not to pay the expense of renewing its license. Zamak is now in the public domain.

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## SIDEWALK SALE - August 2

Historical Society Sidewalk Sale – 9AM – 3PM

410 Delaware Avenue – Palmerton

Each year the Society sets out a table at the Heritage Center and offers for sale many unique and desirable items – both old and new. These include duplicates of some 75 year old treasures that donors have allowed the Society to sell to raise funds for the preservation and maintenance of our buildings and archives.

Don't be disappointed as some were last year. Come early for the best selection of books, photographs, and unusual “Palmertoniana.”





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Historical Society  
Heritage Center**

410 Delaware Avenue  
(610) 824-6954

**HOURS**

**Wednesday** - 12:30-3pm

**Thursday** - 10am-2pm

**Friday** - Noon-4pm

**Saturday** - 10am-2pm

