



October  
2013

## ARCHITECTURAL ANCESTRY: RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOME

*Lauren VanSteenvoort*

When we first moved into our new home in Elverson, we were excited to research its history, and possibly find some old photos to guide us in the restoration. After a few electrical issues, a broken heating system, hot water heater, dishwasher, washer and dryer, a flooded basement, disconnected kitchen plumbing, several roof leaks, and multiple animal and insect infestations, we realized the term “restoration” was being used loosely in this case, and “salvation” may be more appropriate.

The initial flurry of activity and work that the fore-closed house needed distracted us from uncovering the story of the house. Eventually, research became more of a necessary distraction from all of the work. We knew our house had been built around 1825, and after attending a few Historical Com-

mission meetings, we were given an Elverson history book, a few photos, and we were told the house had been the home of Dr. Matthias S. Mengel, a prominent Elverson resident during the 19th and 20th century. The name Mengel surfaced again as we were inventorying all of the broken windowpanes in the house. My husband noticed scratches on one of the windows, which we later deciphered as scrawled handwriting. Mengel seemed to be written on one pane, Madeleine, Jack, and a large initial R on the others. The Elverson book didn't mention a Madeleine, but a search in the Reading Eagle newspaper archives proved that Dr. Mengel had six children, in-

cluding Madeleine, Jack and Robert.

Ancestral research can be complicated. Certain surnames will surface again and again. Mengel was a popular name in Berks County. Dr. Mengel was the only doctor in Elverson, and everyone at that time knew him and his family. In fact, most people living in Elverson today still seem to recall the name. Dr. Mengel's brother, Levi, was the curator of the Reading Museum, and today, an animatronic likeness of Levi will narrate your tour of the museum's second floor. His father, also Matthias Mengel, was a prominent Reading lawyer, and in the early 1800s, the “Mengel Farm” comprised over 140 acres between Elverson and Morgantown.



*Mengel Family, circa 1936: James, Dr. Mengel, Robert, wife Elizabeth, and John (Jack).*

Within a family, in addition to common last names, there were often popular first names, ending in II, IV, VII, Jr., Sr... The middle name and suffix are often left out of news articles and personal correspondence, and first names

are frequently abbreviated, making ancestral

research a tangled web of interconnected relatives. Architectural preservation and restoration always begins with research, and typically that research starts with a search of the property owners, but it is rarely as simple as that. Sometimes the most exciting discoveries will be hidden in the home itself.

*What have you discovered during renovations? Any architectural treasures? Any family secrets? Where do you start your research: property deeds, tax records, newspaper archives? The Historical Society of Berks County is a great source of archived photographs, blueprints, and documents, and the Reading Eagle has a vast collection of newspaper archives digitized on Google News. The Elverson Historical Society wants you to tell us your stories!*

# ELVERSON RODEO HALLOWEEN PARADE!

Chris Cameron

**I**t's time to round up the horses and gallop on over to this year's Elverson Halloween Parade, titled "Elverson Rodeo." **The parade is on Oct. 16th at 7pm; rain date Oct. 17th.**

Elverson Borough is steeped in country western history, having once been home to the famous C-Bar-C Ranch, a country music and entertainment variety show that ran from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s, located in a grove not far from the present day intersection of Route 23 and Route 401.

The C-Bar-C Ranch attracted thousands of visitors every weekend for about 10 years, filling the air with live country western performances from up-and-coming acts to established country acts such as, Tex Ritter, The Andrews Sisters, Shorty Long, and Tex Fletcher, the left handed guitarist. Many of the performers stopped to play on their way to perform on the Reading radio stations.



The C-Bar-C was an entertainment bonanza with old-fashioned carnival games, animals, hand-carved wooden toys, prizes and food. Its most well-known owners were local country western stars, Oklahoma Buck Nation and Texas Ann.

This year's Elverson Rodeo Halloween Parade promises to be a country spectacle in the style of the C-Bar-C tradition.

"Dig up your cowboy hat, find your matching boots, hop on your horse (don't forget your lasso) and parade down our Main St. in Elverson," Esther Prosser, Parade Committee Chairperson said.

If you've never seen the Elverson Halloween Parade, you're in for a surprise. This is small town America at its best, like a John Mellencamp song, and the parade is a lively community event that has many floats, marching bands, fire trucks, antique cars, dance groups, halloweeners, candy and more.

The parade hosts approximately 40 entries from Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts groups, preschools, cheerleaders, businesses, and about six different fire companies.



Music is a huge highlight of the evening. Pre-parade entertainment will begin at 6 pm with John Barnett and company at the Elverson Supply Company and the Cripple Creek Gang at the Deli. The marching bands include Twin Valley High School, Twin Valley Middle School and Owen J Roberts High School.

Lineup will begin on South Pine Street at 6 pm with participants entering South Pine Street from Route 401. Entries will be given line up numbers before parade night. Placards with numbers will be placed along South Pine Street to direct participants where to line up. The parade route will follow Route 23 west and end at the National Penn Bank. Route 23 will be closed to all traffic at 6:30 pm.

Spectator parking will be available at the Community Evangelical Free Church, Elverson Borough Hall, Elverson Fire Hall and Livingood Park. There will be no parking along South Pine Street which includes the YMCA, St. Joseph Health Network and the Heritage Medical Building. These areas are reserved for designated parade participants.

The judge's stand will be located in the front of Shear Heaven Hair Salon, 70 West Main St., close to the National Penn Bank. Prizes will be awarded to first and second place entries in the following categories: Best of Show, Commercial Float, Non-commercial Float, Marching Unit, Scout Group and Best on Wheels. These awards will be announced from the Judge's Stand immediately following the Parade. Show cars will meet on Derby Drive and will be judged before the parade in the categories of classic, custom and antique.

Preregistration is required. All area businesses and residents are invited to enter by completing a registration form available at



[www.elversonboro.org](http://www.elversonboro.org), by calling Esther Prosser at 484-269-7153 or emailing [esther@stoltzfus.com](mailto:esther@stoltzfus.com). The registration deadline is October 10.

# BIG COOKIE

*Aaron Brilliant*

I'm the owner of Big Cookie, a new addition to the Elverson Farmer's Market for 2013. Big Cookie offers premium gourmet cookies in 13 flavors and counting, regular and gluten-free. In addition to the great products offered at this market by the vendors, it is located in the beautiful Livingood Park between routes 23 and 401 off route 82. I've visited several farmers' markets in this area and in my opinion, this market has the most natural, peaceful setting, which makes it very enjoyable for visitors and vendors alike. And there is plenty of parking, which is an added bonus.

Big Cookie started in January 2013, primarily as an online gourmet cookie retailer based in Morgantown, that ships around the country. However, I knew I needed to get my product out in the local community to build from the ground up. I searched for farmers' markets in my area and found the Farmers' Market at Elverson. When I was accepted to be a vendor I was thrilled. I was finally going to get a chance to see what my cookies were made of.

So, how did Big Cookie get started? Well actually, many years ago. In my teens and twenties I knew someday that I'd want to have my own business. Back then cookies weren't even a figment of my imagination. Ideas would run through my mind all the time of creative businesses that I could establish and grow to a grand scale. In fact, I still experience this imaginative thinking of what I could create someday in the future. It's fun, what can I say? It's the entrepreneur in me.

When I started college at Virginia Tech to be a civil engineer, my creative thinking had to take a back seat to the techie in me. The relentless engineering program honed my problem solving and analysis skills so well that I utilize them every day of my life. I rarely regret any of the decisions I make because I analyze the pros and cons of each one to an extent that most would consider it a sickness. And there's no cure!

I believe the events that happened in my life guided me to where I am today. When I was 19, my father passed away which was heartbreaking and something I'll never get over

since we were so close. Shortly after his death, I was diagnosed with cancer, a form of lymphoma to be exact. Well, I recovered relatively quickly but I realized as well as anyone, that life is short and I'm only going to get one chance to make the best of it. My own personal rule is that if you don't like the way things are going, make a change and move on.

So, to make a long story a bit shorter, I spent about 15 years in the corporate world at a handful of different jobs, all positive experiences. I even spent a couple of years on a cattle farm. I have some stories to tell you! But, towards the end of 2012, I needed to make a change in my life and do something that I'd truly enjoy, creating my own business! On my last job assignment I got involved making desserts for my co-workers as part of pot-luck lunches we'd have. Besides the fact that they loved what I made, I enjoyed constructing cake-like entities from scratch using my imaginative engineering. They weren't all structurally

sound but they tasted awesome! One day I tried making cookies and found them to be just as fascinatingly structurally complex. With some controlled testing, I got the cookie I wanted. I took them into work and got amazing compliments across the board. I think I was on to something.

In October 2012, I didn't like the way things were going for me, so I made a change and moved on. Big Cookie was born! At my last job, managers would always mention the term "stretch assignment" to their team, meaning taking on a role that would require them to push themselves to succeed and get out of their comfort zone. Well, that's exactly what I did and I love it!

At the market, I truly enjoy talking to my customers and seeing their faces when they bite into a Big Cookie. Even better, I love when the kiddies advise their parents on what flavors they will need to allow them to make it through the rest of the day. So, come out and try a free sample of Big Cookies and the other great products at the Farmers' Market at Elverson.



## ROBOT RESCUES MILKMAN!

Bob Patry

Tim Kurtz owns a local dairy farm. Tim has cows, lots of cows! Tim, like all farmers, had problems with his cow herd. It seems he could never find time for vacation. Cows got sick, employees got sick, even Tim wanted time off to get sick. Milking was not something he could schedule. If only someone would come up with an automatic milking system!

Good news for Tim, dairy farmers and cows! Some geek somewhere came up with a robotic milking system. You will have to see it to believe it. The cows set up their own milking schedule. While waiting, they roam free around the milking barn. Some take advantage of the free back rubbing machine. After they give up as much milk as they like, they usually lay down in one of the many sand beds. Chewing their cud in bed is relaxing and increases milk production. Since cows walk a lot, the robotic inventors felt it necessary to provide Tim with a manure scraping machine.

Tim's user friendly robot is able to identify each cow by the electronic tag in her ear. When a cow chooses to enter the robot, her ID tag is read and she receives a feed reward customized to her level of production. The robot then cleans her teats and attaches the milk cups, and the milking process begins. When milking is complete, the cups disconnect and she exits the robot. Milking occurs throughout the day and night.

A single robot can milk 60 to 65 cows three times a day. But there is a cost. One robot costs about \$200,000, and Tim has four! The good news is—Tim saves a lot on straw.



The Postal Inspection Service is reporting that some customers are receiving bogus emails about a package delivery. The emails contain a link or attachment that, when opened, installs a malicious virus that could steal information from the customer's computer. The emails, which the sender falsely claims are from USPS, include a message with fraudulent information about an attempted or intercepted package delivery. Customers are told to click on a link, open the attachment or print the label.

Customers who have received one of these emails should take the following actions:

- Do not click the link in the email to print a label or open an attachment.
- Forward the email to [spam@uspis.gov](mailto:spam@uspis.gov) for review and analysis.
- Then, delete it.
- Treat similar messages as spam and delete them as well.

**Several customers of the Elverson Post Office have received this message, along with similar emails from UPS and FedEx.**

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### ◆ Elverson Pumpkin Carving Contest

*Sunday, October 13—6 pm*

*Main Street*

### ◆ Elverson Halloween Parade

*Wednesday, October 16—7 pm*

*Main Street*

### ◆ The Farmers' Market at Elverson

*9 am to 1 pm—Livingood Park*

*Saturdays during the remainder of 2013 as follows:*

*October 26*

*November 23*

*December 21*

### ◆ CPR Pro Class

*Saturday, November 2—8 am*

Twin Valley Fire Department

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## A WORD FROM THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE - DANGEROUS SPAM

Customers receiving bogus USPS emails

[USPS.COM](http://USPS.COM)

**USPS.COM**

### Delivery Report

Your package has arrived on August 17th, but unable to deliver the package. For more info





**Elverson's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest**  
**Sunday, Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 6– 8pm**  
*The contest is open to residents of all ages!*



How it works is simple:

- ◆ Display your carved or decorated pumpkin on your front porch or yard (*Make sure to include your address in the registration form*).
- ◆ If you do not live on Main Street, please indicate this in your registration form and a space on Main Street will be provided for you.
- ◆ Have your pumpkin displayed by 6 *pm* on *Sunday*.
- ◆ Judges will come around to view pumpkins between 6 *pm* and 7:30 *pm*. Prizes will be awarded after the judges have conferred.

**Winners will receive:**

- 1- A gift basket with winning category appropriate prizes
- 2- Be invited to have their pumpkin displayed at the judge's stand during the Halloween Parade.
- 3- Have their name announced as a winner at the Elverson Halloween Parade
- 4- Have their name as a contest winner in the Elverson Borough Newsletter



**\*\*All contestants that register before Oct 6th will win a chance at a free pumpkin.**

## Elverson Pumpkin Carving Contest Entry Form

*Please write first and last names of all participants so that the winners' names may be printed in the Elverson Borough Newsletter & announced at the Halloween Parade.*

Name(s) of participant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you need a space on Main Street? \_\_\_\_\_ How many pumpkins are you entering in the contest? \_\_\_\_\_

**Pumpkins will be judged in seven categories:**

- ◆ Most Creative
- ◆ Funniest
- ◆ Most Traditional
- ◆ Scariest
- ◆ Fall Fun
- ◆ Parade theme: *Rodeo*
- ◆ People's Choice

**To be considered for a prize, pumpkins must be registered. Entries may be mailed in, emailed or called in to:**

*Jenny & Chris Cameron*  
*59 W Main Street*  
*Elverson PA 19520*  
*jennifercameron13@yahoo.com.*  
*For questions or phone registration call 610-901-3058.*

# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ELVERSON BOROUGH?

Jody Phillips

Congratulations to Diane Francart, who knew that the photo printed in the September issue of the Elverson Borough Newsletter is the old home located at 24 Hall Street (at the end of this narrow road in the center of the borough, on the left-hand side). She also knew that this home is noteworthy because it is the oldest, still-standing log cabin in the borough. Since stuccoed over for insulation, the small home was constructed as long ago as the early 1730s, which means it is probably over 280 years old! Known as the Ackley-Winn house, it was reportedly built by the Criley family and sold to Isaac Ackley in 1742.

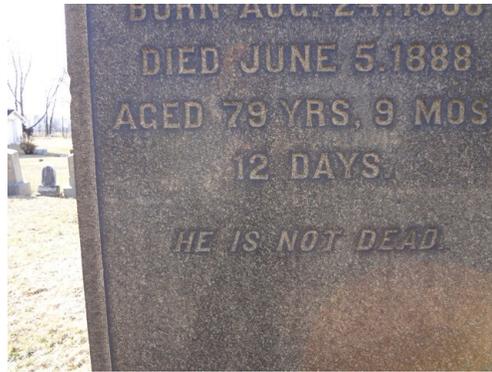
The Ackley family lived in the cabin until, in 1955, Jemima Ackley, the last of the Ackley's to live there, passed away at age 90. Even at that late date, the cabin had no running water and no indoor facilities. It also had no foundation! Modern conveniences (like indoor plumbing) were added and Victor and Kathryn Winn purchased the home in 1955. Kathryn remained in the home until her death in 2011 and Elverson's oldest house is currently owned by Stoltzfus Enterprises and rented out.

Just imagine in the 1950's when most of us lived in centrally heated homes with several bathrooms and clean water available with the turn of a faucet, Jemima was taking her wheelbarrow to the spring for water when her well went dry. Think of her walks in the frosty winter air to the little house out back, often called "the necessary house" or "the place of relief." She would move carefully around her home as its ceilings and floors were not level but it must have been cozy in the winter months as those crooked ceilings were low and the walls thick. It is a testimony to the pioneers who built it that it still stands today.

Diane wins a \$10 gift certificate to the Elverson Deli. Diane gave me the answer to the contest on September 18 – three days after my publication deadline – at Bob Patry's presentation on Elverson's role in the early production of iron in the area. We were chatting when she mentioned the old house, referring to it as the one in the picture for the contest in the last Newsletter. When I asked her for the location of the house, she told me. So I asked her if she knew why it was noteworthy for the Borough of Elverson and she knew the answer to that question too! "So," I said, "Are you entering the contest now?" She said that she would but was sure it was way too late! "No." I told her. "No one else has contacted me about it! My extended deadline is tomorrow. You win!" Needless to say, she was surprised – and quite happy.

So never assume that it is too late to enter the contest. Deadlines can be extended and people can be too busy to look around the borough for the answer.

October's photo is presented in the spirit of the Halloween season.



Please identify this gravestone. Tell me who is buried here, when he died, where he is buried (name and location of cemetery) and why this stone is notable. I've already given you one hint. The person lying beneath this stone is a male. Here is a second hint. You should be able to see the headstone without actually entering the cemetery. One more piece of advice: Don't go looking for it after dark!

Please email your answer to my questions at [Jodysfritz@gmail.com](mailto:Jodysfritz@gmail.com). Everyone who sends in the correct answer within three days from the day I receive the October Elverson Borough Newsletter in my mailbox will have a chance to win the grand prize of a \$10 gift certificate to the Elverson Deli. I will draw a name from among those first entries. Those who are not chosen and anyone else who emails the correct answer to me before the deadline for the next issue will win a runner-up prize of a free beverage at the Deli. Don't forget to look in the cooler on the left side as you enter the store to see what freshly baked goodies are there to tempt you. Fall has officially arrived so maybe Kevin will have baked some special pumpkin and apple treats to go with your piping hot cup of coffee.

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## SEEKING THE OLDEST RESIDENT OF ELVERSON BOROUGH—Jody Phillips

With the very sad passing of Margretta Sheeler Fries on September 17, the Elverson Historical Commission has regained possession of the Elverson Borough Cane and is searching for the current oldest resident of the Borough to accept it and keep it for the rest of his or her life.

To be eligible, this resident must be a minimum of 90 years old and have lived in the borough for at least 20 years. If you know of such a person, please contact me or one of the other members of the Elverson Historical Commission.

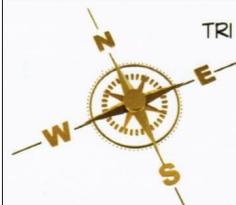
Margretta held the cane for only a little less than three months but I have heard that it was very special to her, as I am sure it will be for its next recipient. Contact me at [Jodysfritz@gmail.com](mailto:Jodysfritz@gmail.com) for more information.

OUR THANKS TO THE ELVERSON BUSINESSES BELOW WHO SUPPORT THIS NEWSLETTER.  
If you would like your business included, please contact Esther Prosser, [esther@stoltzfus.com](mailto:esther@stoltzfus.com). 484.269.7153.

**JAMES D. SCHEFFEY**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

YERGEY • DAYLOR  
ALLEBACH • SCHEFFEY • PICARDI  
50 South Pine St. • Suite 1 • PO Box 526  
Elverson, PA 19520

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**"Trust in the Lord ... He will direct your path." Proverbs 3: 5-6**



**Dr. Leo McCormick**  
**Dr. Darryl Hajduczek**  
**Dr. Roger Walker**  
**Dr. Jared Fiedler**

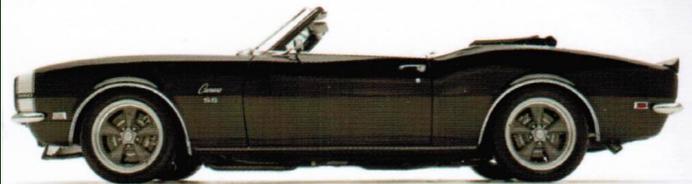
92 Kemp Road  
Pottstown, PA 19465  
(p) 610-705-0201  
(f) 610-705-0180

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**SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 15TH**  
for the November issue to [brenda@stoltzfus.com](mailto:brenda@stoltzfus.com), 26 East Main Street  
or 610-286-5115. Remember to check out the newsletter *in full color* online at  
[www.elversonboro.org](http://www.elversonboro.org).

Elverson Borough  
PO Box 206  
Elverson PA 19520

Return Service Requested

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Stepping Out for an evening stroll,  
I spied a Hot Air Balloon.  
It was out in the distance,  
Just above the Horse Pasture.  
Which was temporarily inhabited,  
By a flock of Canada Geese.  
I charged the geese...  
Clicked and whistled at the horse...  
Triangulated the Hot Air Balloon  
Then hoofed it down to the end of Stuben Drive  
Enjoying this Cool Crisp Evening,  
And a Summerfield Fly-By,

*Seawolf*

