

Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE



VOLUME 15, Winter 2018

Inaugurating the Lillian Hamblin Nelson RESEARCH PAPER

Although now living in California, Lillian Hamblin Nelson is a Paradise native. She returns often for family reunions and has generously contributed to support our Historical Society. PHS plans to offer a research grant in Mrs. Nelson's name. Many PHS members have added excellent, high-level research to our archives, expanding our knowledge and providing interesting monthly meetings. With this grant, we hope to excite even more interest in our area's history. Details about the grant process will be on our website www.paradisehistorical.org

Jane

Jane Niering, President

LILLIAN HAMBLIN NELSON

A Paradise Township Native Who Still Feels the Pull of Home

Lillian was born in 1920 to Harry T. and Lillian G. Hamblin, when they owned and operated the Forest House in Swiftwater. The Forest House was a resort on Upper Swiftwater Road across from today's Swiftwater Post Office.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin were civic minded. Harry was a long time school teacher, who was also active in social organizations. He served as a Paradise Township Supervisor and as Associate Judge in Monroe County. Lillian's mother ran the Forest House and was a leader in the former Swiftwater Methodist Church. Both Harry and his wife Lillian appeared in church plays, which were popular at the time. They instilled a sense of community service and love of nature in their family.

Lillian attended the Madison School, an historic location in Paradise Township. Located on Upper Swiftwater Road, the school was close to her residence at the Forest House. At the time Paradise did not have a high school, and students and their families attended schools outside the township. Since Lillian's father was a teacher at Stroudsburg High School and traveled there daily, Lillian joined the car pool in either the cars of her father or fellow teacher Jacob Knauf, who lived on what is now Carlton Road.

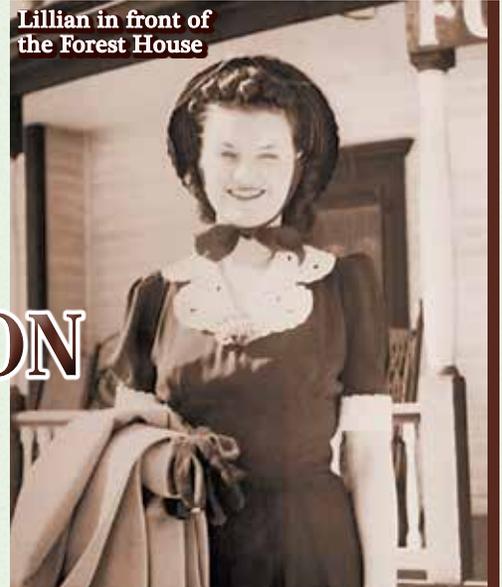
Lillian became interested in performing and was a singer and actress in school plays. In 1936, as a Stroudsburg High School Junior, Lillian won an Oratorical Contest for her speech "Dignity of Labor." Following graduation from high school, Lillian continued her education at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College. She became active in school performances and was in the cast of "The Gondoliers" by Gilbert and Sullivan. She also performed in "Pride and Prejudice."

After college graduation, Lillian was a teacher at the Barrett School and in Langhorne Pa. She then moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked at the Federal Bureau of Investigation

(FBI). There, she met her husband William Davis, an FBI agent. Upon being transferred to California, Lillian vowed to return to Swiftwater each summer to spend time with her family and to enjoy the Poconos that she so dearly loved. William and Lillian had two children, Gail and William. Mr. Davis died in 1967. Lillian later married Leonard Nelson, who died in 2002.

Lillian has been civic minded throughout her life, giving to local charities and causes focusing on music, the arts, education and nature. In 2013, she donated a 30-acre nature preserve to the Shasta Land Trust (The Lillian Nelson Nature Preserve) in Redding, California, for the community and future generations to enjoy. She has also been active in the Shasta Historical Society, located in Redding, California.

Lillian and her family are charter members of the Paradise Historical Society and have followed the activities of the society from their California homes. The Lillian Hamblin Nelson grant program recognizes Lillian's sustained, dedicated support of the Paradise Historical Society. Her interest in the history and natural beauty of the area have been an inspiration to the Society, and through this grant program we hope to enhance our documentation of the township's history. 



Lillian in front of the Forest House

COLLECTING, PRESERVING
& DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

Winter

Moving THE ACE STORE

At our June 2017 meeting, John Layton chronicled the amazing move of the Ace Store. Many members of our Historical Society and the community witnessed the building being trundled from its original location, and set back away from the dangers of the road. John's talk made it clear that the day of the move was just the tip of the iceberg. A transcript of John's presentation is available at www.paradisehistorical.org and in our archives at Barrett Paradise Friendly Library.



1

The East Swiftwater Resort and Ace Store, August 13, 1897. We know the date "because, in the Hettie Ace Diary, Hettie Ace recorded that Harris took a picture of house on this date. . .It's interesting to look at this picture. There's a chimney here which we won't see in any other picture and the posts are square and there's no bric-a-brac on the store side, but there is on the house side and the posts are curved."

"Here's one of the reasons why we moved the house. You can see the proximity of the house to the road. The little red deal was to let cars know they were coming close as if it made a difference. . . Another problem was that we would get runoff from the road in the basement."



2



3

Groundbreaking was August 22, 2016, "present were Alan Gross, the general contractor, myself, and my mother Jeanne Layton who is 97 years old, Susan (Layton, 5th generation owner of the Ace Store), and Carol Hillestad representing the Historical Society. We brought out antique shovels. I was a little afraid to push on them because they were a little rusty. But, we were able to get a little dirt with the shovel and that was the first day."

"The excavator for the job is Jerry Rinker, he dug the holes. We had to make a ramp to take the house in on at 1.5 percent grade, and that's a pretty long grade if you're familiar with that work. And that would give Clark Bartholomew, who works for Jerry as an excavator, kudos for making that so level. The moving company said when they arrived that they'd never seen a finer ramp before."



4



5

Wolfe House & Building Movers did the actual lifting and moving of the building. Part of the preparation meant having "the footings in place before you can move the house, but no foundation. . . They hadn't gotten the trucks parked to unload stuff when they were already banging in to the foundation to put the I-beams underneath of it. They had to excavate all the way around & punch these holes in so the iron could be pushed through."

“The jack sits in the middle of that cribbing. They lift the house with the jack and then set in some more cribbing and set the house down on the new cribbing. Shows you how the foundation got broken apart and the cribbing piles as they were under the house to hold it in place. They drove that little tractor under the house, it was like going into a mine he had to duck his head every time.”



The day of the move, September 27, 2016. The house movers have told people “you can set a glass of red wine on a table with a white table cloth and it won’t splash during the move. I can’t tell you about the red wine, but I can tell you that water bottle on the sloping window sill didn’t move. . . It took two hours from the time the wheels started turning until the building was in place. Just two hours.”



“Now it’s in place over the footings and you can see the pads underneath. They used a plumb bob to line it up with the corners, and there’s Alan with the moving company ensuring that it’s squared up. There it is sitting in place.”



Settled in its new location, with a lot of interior and landscaping work completed. Thank you, Susan Layton, protector of this quintessential piece of Paradise history — the spirit of Ace’s Corners! [PHS](#)



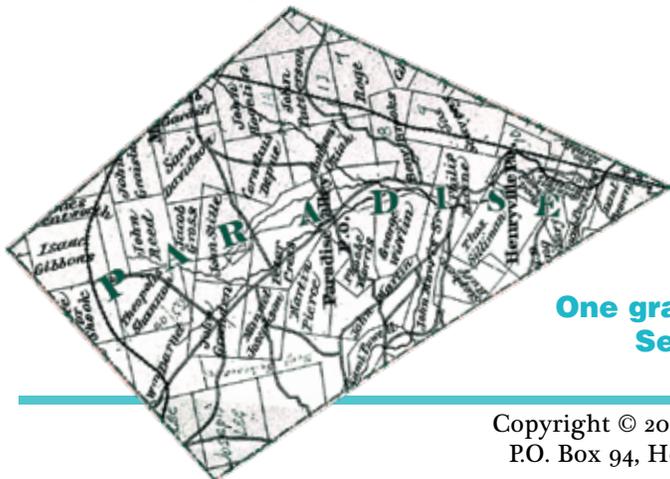
Expanding Our Reach: Lillian Hamblin Nelson Research Grant

The research grant has two purposes:

1 *To further interest in the history of the township.* The research produced will be maintained and available for use in PHS archives. The writer(s) are expected to present their research results at a regular meeting of the society. If appropriate, this would include visuals documenting the research.

2 *To encourage scholars in researching topics of interest in Paradise, such as:*

- Genealogy – families and family histories
- Resorts – inns, guest houses, hotels
- People – visitors, summer residents & dignitaries and oral histories
- Businesses and livelihoods
- Government – organization, tax records, officials, schools and school boards
- Transportation – roads, railroads, vehicles
- Churches & cemeteries
- Natural history – streams, dams, hunting, & fishing
- Flood of 1955
- Postcard collections



One grant annually of up to \$2,500 may be awarded. See details at www.paradisehistorical.org [PHS](#)

Paradise Historical Society
P.O. Box 94
Henryville, PA 18332

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Coming Soon to a **RAILROAD TUNNEL** Near You...



The original "high bridge" railroad, labeled "east of Henryville, Pa." The massive, curved stonework retaining walls can still be seen today.

The double tunnel bridges being built in 1910 to replace the high bridge. This view is looking upstream. Note that the roadbed on the right is actually a bridge. Work to rebuild this amazing structure will begin in summer 2018.



The double tunnel between Paradise and Analomink on Route 191 will be closed for complete re-building during 2018. Did you know that the tunnel cars pass through is actually a bridge over the Paradise Creek? This will be a project for the ages, and Kim Williams, photographer and railroader *extraordinaire* is following it closely. Kim offers these images, from the collection of Steamtown National Historic Site. [PHS](#)

The directors and officers of Paradise Historical Society are:

Bruce Estell • Peter Gonze • Dan Hamblin
Carol Hillestad • Aaron Imbt • John Layton
Laura Layton • Harold Metzgar
Jane Niering • Kim Williams

And We Welcome Our New Members:

Patricia Caprio • Will Eldredge
David and Donna Gonze
Alice Makla
Donald and Marilynn Oakes
Peter and Linda Salmon
Maureen Shultis • Suzanne Smith

Become a Member Today!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

Please help Paradise Historical Society collect, protect & share the interesting history of our area.

- Student or Senior (65+) - \$8.00 Family - \$25.00
- Individual - \$10.00 Corporate - \$50.00
- Couple - \$20.00 Sustaining - \$100.00

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to:



Paradise Historical Society,
P.O. Box 94, Henryville, PA 18332

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