



The Warrior Run - Fort Freeland Heritage Society Newsletter

February, 2025

President's Message

I was once told that every good speech starts with a story; it strikes the interest in your audience and can set the tone for your entire message. But this remark, this speech as it may be called, contains several stories that are just as important today just as they were when first told 240 years ago. History some say is behind us, it's a time that has passed and while that may be true, history is relevant always. Without our history, without knowing where we have come from, we are certain to repeat the same events at some point. We are doomed to relive events that possibly could be avoided by simply recalling what once was. And history has shaped all our lives, every one of us has had our lives altered by our journey, whether that be on a personal level or a national level.

The story begins with a 3-cent tax on tea. This event, involving the East India trading company, and the Crown, became a catalyst for a change in the world. Now some of you may be familiar with the famous tea party in Boston, but the importance was this taxation on a drink was one of the many ways the Crown was imposing more control over colonists as a repayment for the defense and support the colonies received during the French and Indian War. It was a way to control loyalty and a way to demand it. But all it took was a spark, one small act from a group of actors to change the world. Now I say they were actors because they were actually militia dressed as native Americans. Oddly enough this was one of the first documented cases of domestic terrorism here in the United States... Regardless in short order this event eventually brings us to Shot Heard 'Round the World... the first shot at the battle of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775. Defiance and outspokenness became regular for the colonies. Tired of the Rule under the Crown, the word was spreading and eventually the British came to collect guns and ammunition. After going through Concord, they met resistance on a bridge in Lexington Massachusetts. Now we aren't definitive on which side actually fired that shot, but it was another flame in the fire that birthed this nation. All of this coincides with the story of the near 80 Patriots laid to rest in this cemetery. Their lives were affected, changed, but not just for them, but their descendants as well. These men fought for something they believed in, something they knew would change the world, something that would give their lineage, their family, a better life. The sacrifice made was not small, the stories show the hardships these men endured.

For our area here in Central Pennsylvania, our villages lived in fear; the world was changing around them, things were hostile here for settlers. One settler from New Jersey in 1772, came here and purchased a 511-acre parchment of land that became regarded as one of the best developed parcels in Northumberland County by 1778. It was no surprise that 12 families would fortify themselves on this property. In 1778, something called the Big Runaway or Great Runaway happened. There were raids and attacks across the valley. The Loyalist troops and British Allied Native Americans were raging through chasing the settlers out. Most relocated to Fort Augusta now known as Sunbury and some traveled further leaving the area forever. Evacuation in the Susquehanna Valley happened twice, the first as I mentioned and a smaller scale which leads us to the events that occurred across the field from where I stand. The local settlers would fortify themselves in the Vreeland Property. It's unknown if they didn't receive the orders to evacuate or they just decided to stand their ground. They would spend the winter of 1778-1779, fortified and protected to the best of their abilities and in the spring, they would have a small skirmish killing seven men incurred. Again, in July, an attack happened in which 3 young men were killed and two were taken prisoner. But on July 28th, 1779, a force of 400 combatants descended on the Fort. 121 inhabitants would stand their ground and fight until they could no longer. Once out of ammunitions, surrender was imminent. The women and one boy dressed as a girl would be released to Fort Augusta, the rest taken prisoner. Benjamin Franklin recalled and told the story of the Brave Defenders of Warrior Run. A founding father recognized the small-scale importance of the fight the men of Central Pennsylvania had for the greater cause. Today we memorized this brand from Benjamin Franklin as Warrior Run School District uses the Defender as their mascot. While there are countless tales of rebellion and heroism from the Revolutionary War, ours is unique to us. It shaped our valley; our little section of this commonwealth exists because of the fortitude and sacrifice of those Defenders. And our nation exists because of the men like the ones resting here today. Our "defenders" of the colonies. Whether we realize it or not it wasn't just a sacrifice of bodily life, but it was a sacrifice of the entire families' lives and livelihoods. Homes were burned, innocent noncombatant people murdered, the resistance was to be extinguished by all means necessary. But it burned hotter because of these instances; whether it was the massacres in the valley of innocent settlers, like my ancestors murdered in the white deer mountains, or whether it was a group of people who had enough and decided to fight and resist was better than the alternatives. James Madison said it best, "I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery"; this mind set created this nation. A nation of Life, Liberty and pursuit of happiness exists. The American Experiment. Fast forward and 8 years to the day after the Shot heard Round the World, George Washington stood on the steps of his Headquarters and proclaimed. The glorious task for which we first flew to arms being thus

accomplished, the liberties of our country being fully acknowledged and firmly secured and the character of those who have persevered through every extremity of hardship, suffering, and danger, being immortalized by the illustrious appellation of the patriot army, nothing now remains but for the actors of this mighty scene to preserve a perfect unvarying consistency of character through the very last act; to close the drama with applause, and to retire from the military theatre with the same approbation of angels and men which has crowned all their former virtuous actions.”

These men carried out their brave selfless acts until the end. This monument is here on this ground and yes it commemorates the patriots that rest here, but like those acts of valor witnessed then, like that tea party or like the resistance throughout the lands it's just a one piece of the puzzle. The time frame from Lexington all the way to Yorktown created several of these men, enshrouded with their acts of selfless valor in an effort to create a nation of freedom and they're buried all across this great country. Today we pay tribute to these patriots lying here, but in turn I feel we pay tribute to all patriots. Their history, their sacrifice changed our lives as well. We live in a nation of freedom, there is no place else like it. It is the last stand on earth. History is just as relevant today as it was when it occurred, we need to always keep in the backs of our minds that what happens today alters what will be tomorrow. Every aspect of our lives has been changed by our history. My ancestors didn't have the same story as yours, but what's similar is that the outcome and what became our generation was still changed.

I try to avoid getting on a soapbox so to speak, but as a nation we should remember what our patriots sacrificed, what they stood for. Our nation used to walk proudly. The sacrifices of these patriots were unlike anything else known. Our nation took pride in that, Took pride in creating a concept that all men are created equal and should never surrender to servitude. And it shaped future generations. But as history is lost or changed or forgotten we lose a sense of this. The patriotic spirit that is instilled upon us from our ancestors becomes weaker. We lose a sense of that freedom without even realizing it as little-by-little things change around us. So, few of us realize it and some do and never speak up. So, when I see people who do not care, or they misinterpret history or change or cancel it, I get disheartened. Because every bit of our nation's history, whether it's good or bad, is still important. We must remember that Human nature is flawed. We can be certain that mistakes will be made. But what we learn from those mistakes is the value from that mistake. I was told once mistakes are only a bad thing if you take nothing from it. Lessons are bound to happen, and mistakes can be forgiven as long as something is learned. History should be remembered as it was not as it should have been. And remembered with pride. It's part of us. It's our journey. The youth of our nation face challenge in their future. So much history is being forgotten. A lot of it is small family history, but again history big or small is how we got here. And once that history is gone, lost with each passing generation it cannot be recovered fully. So, I say to the youth to get out, take interest, research and talk to your elders, find all the history and stories about your ancestors that you can. Document, and by golly enjoy every moment of it. It's your journey: it's your heritage. It is YOU. So, remember that we are Americans. Walk tall, take pride knowing we are not descended from fearful men. Take pride that our country is that last stand of freedom on earth. Remember your history. And continue that patriotic spirit that created our nation we live in.

Respectfully
Landon C. Koch
Warrior Run-Fort Freeland Heritage Society, President

Ham Bar-B-Q

We have some of our famous Ham-Bar-B-Q for sale.
 Frozen: 2- 3 lb. and 2 - 4 lb. containers.
 \$7.00 per pound
 Contact Cathy Metzger if interested to reserve and to pick up.
cmetzger507@gmail.com
 570-713-4816



DONATIONS FOR
FEBRUARY 2025

Alan Hackenberg
 William A Knecht Memorial Court No 144
 Watsontown Centennial Lioness Lions Club



Calling all Businesses

The Warrior Run Fort Freeland Heritage Society is looking for sponsors for a new fundraising event!

On Saturday May 17th, the WRFHHS will be hosting our first ever Uncork the Past Wine Festival at the Historic Warrior Run Church.

The Society purchased the Warrior Run Church from the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission several years ago and over the course of time we have been dedicated to preserving and restoring the historic building, built in 1835, for our local community. The Historic Warrior Run Church has one of the largest Revolutionary War Patriot cemeteries in the state of Pennsylvania. In 2024, the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution came together with the Society and built a beautiful stone monument to honor nearly 80 patriots in their final resting place. It will be featured in the upcoming America 250 event. The Society has interest in restoration projects at the site that will help magnify this occasion and celebrate the local history in our area. It is our goal to have the Historic Warrior Run church on the map for the event so that visitors from all across the state and farther can plan to visit this beautiful and sacred ground.

We are looking for sponsors to help with costs for the Uncork the Past Wine Festival. Funds would be used to help offset the costs for the live music, complimentary glasses, waste costs, rental fees as well as advertising the event! All participating sponsors will be advertised on a sponsorship board at the event entrance gate as well as publicly thanked from the stage before the live music starts. Should you choose to sponsor our event we will also extend an invitation for your company to set up and advertise onsite for no additional cost if you would wish to do so.

Uncork the Past Wine Festival

May 17, 2025
11:00am until 5:00pm
The Historic Warrior Run Church at 41 Warrior Lane, Watsonstown, PA 17777

The WRFHHS is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization, any and all funds donated for sponsorship in this event will be documented as a charitable donation for tax purposes and a receipt for the donation to document this will be sent out to all sponsors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME A SPONSOR

Landon C Koch (WRFHHS President)
570-428-4588
culliganman59@gmail.com

UNCORK THE PAST Wine Festival



freelandfarm.org/uncorked-wine-festival-2025/

**Wineries, Food Trucks,
Craft Vendors, Music, and More**
41 Warrior Lane, Watontown PA
Sat, May 17th, 2025 11am-5pm



Newsletter Articles

Please email articles and photos to be included in the newsletter to kyhouser@windstream.net. You can simply write the information in an email or copy and paste from another document. The best format is a Word or an Open Office document. PDF files don't work well with the newsletter format. We want you to be a part of our newsletter, so don't be shy. Help us to make our newsletter very interesting and informative.

Karen Y. Houser

Warrior Run Fort Freeland Heritage Society

Board / Special Meetings - 2025

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>
January 13	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
February 10	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
March 10	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
April 14	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
May 12	6:00 p. m.	Hower-Slote House
June 9	6:00 p. m.	Hower-Slote House
July 14	6:00 p. m.	Hower-Slote House
August 11	6:00 p. m.	Hower-Slote House
September 8	6:00 p. m.	Hower-Slote House
October 13	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
November 10	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building
December 8	6:00 p. m.	Delaware Township Building

Calendar of Events - 2025

April 29 (Last Tue)	Spring Dinner	6:00 p. m.	Watson Inn
May 17	Wine Festival	11:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Warrior Run Church
June 8	Strawberry Festival	11:00 a.m.	Warrior Run Church
October 4 - 5	Heritage Days		Hower-Slote Farm
November 10	Membership Meeting	7:00 p. m.	Delaware Twnshp Bldg
	Election / Regular Board Meeting		
December 13 (Second Sat)	Candlelite Service	7:00 p. m.	Warrior Run Church

RAISE THE REGION

The Raise the Region is coming up on March 12th and 13th, 2025. It is a 30-hour giving campaign designed to raise funds for nonprofits like the Warrior Run Fort Freeland Heritage Society. You can donate online with Raise the Region or if you prefer you can donate directly to the Society. Just mail your donation to us at PO Box 26, Turbotville PA 17772. Any small donation is appreciated as always. Stay warm and safe.

Thanks
Cathy Metzger (Treasurer)



Warrior Run Fort Freeland Heritage Society

Board of Directors

(Terms run from January 1 to December 31)

2025-2027

Steve Moser
Melissa Kilgus
Peggy Gelnett
Randy Watts
Alfred Reeves

2024-2026

Landon Koch
Cathy Metzger
Daniel Phillips
Heidi Eppenbach
Ethan Whitmoyer

2023-2025

Leon Hagenbuch
Jane Koch
Sue Eppenbach
Doug Ertel
June Moser

(Student Members)

Officers

President - Landon Koch (570-538-4588)
Vice President - Melissa Kilgus (570-538-5593)
Secretary - Heidi Eppenbach (570-568-1870)
Assistant Secretary - Sue Eppenbach (570-568-1870)
Treasurer - Cathy Metzger (570-713-4816)
Assistant Treasurer - Al Reeves (570-538-1928)
Membership (appointed) - Cathy Metzger (570-713-4816)

Audit/Finance - Scott Pawling (570-538-9582), Melissa Kilgus (570-538-5593)
Nominating Committee - Heidi Eppenbach,
Historian - Leon Hagenbuch / Randy Watts
Newsletter - Karen Houser (570-538-2557)

Committee Leaders

Church - Jane Koch (570-538-1756), Landon Koch (570-538-4588), Doug Ertel (570-538-5711)
Church Grounds - Daniel Phillips (570-713-4816), Leon Hagenbuch (570-490-8279), Randy Watts (570-437-4048)
Weddings - Traci Pawling (570-490-9895)
Strawberry Festival - Cathy Metzger (570-713-4816), Daniel Phillips (570-713-4816)
Heritage Days - Committee
Candlelight Service - Landon Koch (570-538-4588)
House/Property - Leon Hagenbuch (570-490-8279), Steve Moser (570-649-5124), Rich Nornhold (570-238-3856)

Honorary Board Members

Janet Hause *	Jane Shuman *
Betty Miller *	Virginia Hartman *
Donna Meyer	Ruth Moser *
Preston Webb *	Mike Slease *
Hall Williams *	Bob Franks
Richard Nornhold	Alfred Reeves
Ruth Webb *	Sue Eppenbach

* denotes deceased member

CHECK THE YEAR ON YOUR CARD AND MAKE SURE YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS CURRENT

Bringing our history to life....

Place
Stamp
Here

*Warrior Run
Fort Freeland
Heritage Society*

*P. O. Box 26
Turbotville PA 17772*

*E-mail:
info@freelandfarm.org*

*Check us out on the web!
www.freelandfarm.org*

KEEP your membership current
**Note your membership status on the mailing label **

Membership is key to our group's mission. It's an important step towards funding our projects and goals. Your membership allows you to receive four annual newsletters which inform you of the calendar of events, our organization's achievements and ways to become an active member.

Please register me/us as:

- LIFE MEMBER (\$200 per person in one payment)
 CONTRIBUTING MEMBER (\$20.00 per adult person per year)
 STUDENT MEMBER (\$1.00 per year – having student status)
 SUSTAINING MEMBER (\$50.00 or more per year as a special support member)

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

To update your WR/FFHS membership status, please mail this form with the proper amount to:

Cathy Metzger
2575 Turbot Avenue
Watson town PA 17777

cmetzger507@gmail.com 570-713-4816
(make checks payable to WR/FFHS)