

der

# Wetterhahn

The Weathervane



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The Newsletter of Renfrew Museum & Park

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## RENFREW'S ROOTS REVISITED

In local folklore, a family named Renfrew lived in a log cabin on the area now referred to as Renfrew Museum and Park. However, historical documents indicate the land was either owned by the Ringer or Stoner families during that time period.

By research of land deeds we know that a young man, Daniel Royer, purchased on two occasions land (150 acres in total) from Abraham Stoner. This was the beginning of the Royer Farmstead.

Born in 1762, Daniel was a tanner by trade. He married Catherine Stoner (daughter of Abraham) and thus began the Royer/Renfrew story.



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The farmstead thrived and so did the Royers. Ten children certainly helped with the work load, of which there was plenty to go around. The farm, tannery, and a grist mill were all vital parts of the bustling farmstead.

Daniel Royer built the stone house, now the museum house in 1812. The kitchen was added in 1815. A typical Pennsylvania German farmhouse, the workmanship displayed is admirable, even by today's standards.

The property remained in the Royer family until the youngest child's death, Nancy Royer Fahnestock, in 1898. The land was transferred to Dr. A. H. Stickler.

The Stickler family owned the property for many years until the death of Belle Stickler, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Stickler.

During the Stickler years of ownership there were tenant farmers. The Minnicks from the turn of the century until 1933, then the Beaver family until 1942.

This is the time frame in which the last owners came into the picture. Edgar Nicodemus purchased the tract of 91 acres from the Belle Stickler estate. Later, he purchased the remainder of what would become the 107 acres of Renfrew.

The Nicodemuses were excellent stewards of the once Royer farm. Edgar Nicodemus passed away in 1965. The property was bequeathed to Waynesboro upon the death of Emma Geiser Nicodemus in 1973.

Officially opened in 1975, Renfrew Museum and Park is truly a treasure for all to enjoy, thanks to all those before.

RENFREW PARK A Pennsylvania German Farmstead by Dan Arthur and Ron Keiper, copyright 1987.  
Clyde Roberts - picture of the original painting by Clyde Roberts.





## THE ROOSTER IS BACK IN THE BARN

The legendary John Bell Rooster weather vane has on been placed on exhibit in the Visitors Center, once again. Some may not know that this rooster weather vane has significant historical ties to the early days of Waynesboro. Its humble origin is not clearly documented. However, the weather vane rested atop a hug stone jug on the peak of the roof of John Bell's pottery business, which was established in Waynesboro in 1833. The one and one-half story brick dwelling and pottery was located on the corner of Main Street and Leitersburg Road (now the corner of West Main and Potomac Streets). The property extended down to the alley that today is beside the ruins of the St. Paul's Reformed Church.

It became a common saying in Waynesboro that, "The weather depends on John Bell's rooster."<sup>1</sup> For many years it weathered all that nature and man could throw at its softly painted exterior. The Confederate soldiers passing through Waynesboro used both the jug and the weather vane as targets. The jug was broken, but the rooster was only wounded in the encounters. The rooster remained faithfully on duty until the day the building was razed.<sup>2</sup>

The resilient rooster then became one of the prized artifacts in the Waynesboro collection of the late Dr. Mark Lester Heefner. From Dr. Heefner's estate this battle-scarred came to its final roosting spot at Renfrew Museum and Park. The rooster outline was adopted as Renfrew's logo with a patent that was registered on August 9, 1977.

As a representation of this great part of our local history, Renfrew is selling heavy copper rooster cookie cutters along with several cookie recipes, in the Gift Shop for \$10 each. The gift shop hours are Monday through Friday from 11:00am till 4:00pm.

<sup>1</sup> The Shenandoah Pottery by A. H. Rice & John Baer Stoult, copyright 1929

<sup>2</sup> Waynesboro 1900 by Benjamin Mathias Nead, copyright 1900

## CHANGING GALLERY'S NEW EXHIBIT

The "Changing Gallery" will open on April 22 with a colorful collection of English earthenware of the nineteenth century. Examples of the English earthenware include: soft paste wares, spatter ware, yellow glazed earthenware, mocha/slip banded ware, Jackfield pottery, lusterwares, transfer prints, ironstone, cut sponge stamped, and majolica. Items were adorned with various hand decorated or transfer printed patterns. Forms consist of many types of tableware, especially tea wares. The exhibit will consist of pieces from the museum and several local collectors.

## RON HARBAUGH "Mr. Fix It"



Ron Harbaugh, the unassuming man you see at Renfrew, is always involved in a project.

Part of our Buildings and Grounds maintenance staff, Ron is a tremendous asset.

The Waynesboro native started as a carpenter's apprentice in Washington, D. C. doing mostly remodeling.

Now this once "apprentice" enjoys building replicas of small scale antique objects, usually from pictures. There are many examples of Ron's handy work throughout Renfrew.

Whether you need a repair done, or a set of shelves built, Ron is your man.

Married for 51 years, the father of three and grandfather of six he loves the outdoors. Ron's favorite out-door sport, at which he excels, is pitching horseshoes.

Renfrew is lucky to have Ron Harbaugh, our own Mr. "Fix-it".





## VIEW FROM THE BORDERS

For more than two centuries, since the settlement of Renfrew, much of the landscape on the property is unchanged and many of the buildings remain from Royer's time.

However the sights and sounds from Renfrew's borders are rapidly changing. From the southeast to the southwest corners, excavation for roadways and public utility construction abounds. The view over rich farmland has given way to barren land with prospects of single family homes and two and three story townhouses, totaling 557 units.

On the adjoining property, a hillside is being leveled in preparation to build these houses and roads. In place of green fields huge earthmoving equipment is seen. Often the roar of explosives to break apart the rock hides the quiet sounds of nature.

It would be desirable for the development to have scenic greenway easements, planned trails to funnel future foot traffic into the park, and strong protection for the Antietam Creek and the wetlands. It is our desire to have an open communication line with government officials and the developers to make wise decisions that directly impact Renfrew. The developer will use the beauty of Renfrew as a selling point to future residents so it would only seem reasonable to work together with Renfrew representatives.

Now is the time for Renfrew patrons to stand together with a clear message to those making decisions that will have a lasting impact on the museum and park. As the view from the borders of Renfrew changes, let's work together so that for centuries to come Renfrew remains undamaged by growth and development in the area.

## A TIME OF TRANSITION

Director/Curator, Jim Ross resigned from Renfrew Museum and Park effective December 15, 2005. Mr. Ross' plans to pursue other related avenues in the museum field. While Jim was at Renfrew, he developed several new programs including the "Haunted Farm", "Christmas Village", and worked with the Nicodemus Center to create the "Cumberland Valley Pottery Festival". Jim's relaxed manner and friendly personality will be greatly missed at Renfrew.

Renfrew Committee, Inc. (RCI) has given its Personal Committee the task of beginning the hiring process and resumes from interested persons across the country. Hopefully, the new person will be in place by early summer. Those interested in applying for the position of Curator/Director may do so by submitting a resume and application letter to: Attention David Hykes (Chairman, Personnel Committee), P.O. Box 511, Waynesboro, PA 17268. Applications are due by March 31, 2006. Renfrew Committee, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The current Renfrew staff is overseeing the day-to-day operations of Renfrew Museum and Park. Much appreciation goes to John Frantz, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Bonnie Iseminger, Visitors Services/ Administrator, and Ron Harbaugh, Assistant Maintenance personnel. The dedication of these individuals and all the volunteers of Renfrew is the museum's greatest asset.

*From the desk of: David Hykes*

## SEEKING TOUR GUIDES

As we are about to embark on our 2006 season, we invite all who would like to interpret history to contact us at Renfrew. No previous training is required, we will train you. The rewards of interacting with our visitors is immeasurable.

If you would like more information, or would like to become a volunteer, please call 717-762-4723. We'll be glad to talk with you.





## CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT RENFREW

March 25-Saturday-- Park Clean-up Day  
April 1- Saturday-- Rain date (for Clean-up)  
April 15 -Saturday- Brothers of the Brush  
Easter Egg Hunt 10 am- 1-pm  
April 22- Museum Opens for season  
June 3 & 4 -(Saturday and Sunday)  
Pottery Fest-Saturday 10-4  
- Sunday 12-4  
July 1 & 8- Threshing and binding demonstrations  
at Renfrew  
(Part of the Waynesboro Fest celebration)  
August 12 & 13-Saturday & Sunday-  
Civil War Encampment  
October 14- Pumpkin Fest

Contributors to "der Wetterhahn"  
John and Jean Frantz  
Amanda Hykes, John Hykes  
Bonnie Iseminger

## RENFREW'S WISH LIST

Listed below are a few of the items that would enhance our programs and facilities. Remember all contributions to Renfrew Museum and Park are tax deductible as allowed by law. Thanks for your continued help and support.

2 chairs for library area in Visitors Center  
2 comfortable office chairs  
Books on chalk ware and PA German holidays  
Small farm equipment  
Counter top-revolving post card stand  
Volunteers for 2006 season-Tour guides and help with garden maintenance- No previous experience required.

If you have any of the above-mentioned items or would like to volunteer, please call 717-762-4723.

# der Wetterhahn

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

