

*The ZHS News, Volume 238, Jan. 2024*



The last of the old-time taverns still survives in Zelenople.



See page 4 for details.

### President's Message:

Happy New Year !

It is hard to believe that we are already one month into the new year. It seems like just yesterday we were preparing for the Christmas Home Tour. By the way, if you did not attend, you need to get on the list for next year. Marietta and her team put on a wonderful event that seems to sell out every year.

The office has been closed to the public for the past month, but plenty is still going on. The board met and we had our strategic planning meeting for the upcoming year. We would like to welcome our two new board members Katina Koontz and Don Ford. We would also like to thank our outgoing board members Krista Moon and Patricia Griest. Our board members dedicate countless hours to keeping this organization running smoothly and we thank them for that.

The day-to-day business continues here. The Christmas decorations have been taken down; thank you to those of you for your time. Volunteers are still spending countless hours making sure the two houses stay clean, updated, and ready for any tours that are scheduled. We always are available for tours by appointment so if you know of anyone or any groups that are interested, please leave a message with the office or send us an email.

The office will continue to be closed to the public for the month of February but we are already gearing up for the upcoming year. One of our first events will be the Spring Tea so be sure to get your tickets early. As we begin the new year remember we are always looking for volunteers. You can let us know in what way you would like to help and how often you would like to be here. Even an hour or two here and there makes a big difference.

Here is to a wonderful 2024 !

Joel Grobe, President



**America250**  
A Journey Through Time

**Butler Eagle**

NOVEMBER 2023 PAGE

## Zelienople's history dates back to frontier

By Tom Nesbitt

Prior to 1800, the area that would become Zelienople was a dense, old-growth forest with-out roads or significant settlement.

Indian villages and trails traversed the area and were centuries old. The only notable early traveler to enter this valley was a 23-year-old George Washington on his first public mission. He was delivering a letter to the commander of the French-held Ohio Country on behalf of the governor of Virginia. He and his entourage of Indian guides and interpreters traveled through the area in 1753. The trail from Logstown—now Ambler—went directly through what would later become Zelienople.

It wasn't until after the Revolutionary War and the creation of the state of Pennsylvania that the area was settled. One of the first settlers in the area and the namesake for Zelienople, Zelis Basse Passavant was the daughter of Detmar Basse, a German immigrant who arrived in the area in 1753.

Sanitation, Kavanaugh Machine Flexible Roll, Herman Pneumatic, John Ith Lumber, C.B. Harper Flouring Mill, Empire Glass Works, LaSaver Carriage, Universal Manufacturing, Hobbs Industrial Fans and Cunningham, Shirley and TASA Coa Companies.

There has been a tavern at Main & New Castle streets since Andrew McClure's tavern in 1881. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's troops tarred and feathered McClure as a British sympathizer in 1813 on their way to battle the British on Lake Erie.

Another early tavern, The Golden Eagle Hotel, was built by Rudolph Keiler in 1825, but the former stage coach stop was demolished in 1855.

After the great fire of 1902 destroyed five buildings, including the Grand Central Hotel, the

Zelienople High School opened in 1909. Inset, Zelis Basse Passavant was the daughter of Detmar Basse, one of the first settlers in the area and the namesake for Zelienople.

ZELIENOPLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In case you missed it, the Butler & Cranberry Eagles had a nice article on the history of Zelienople, printed Nov. 14th. It covered our history from Washington's visit, Basse's settlement, the early growth of the town, the Buhls and the Passavants and several historic photos were included. Anyone wishing an electronic copy of this article should visit the ZHS webpage at [www.zeliehistory.org](http://www.zeliehistory.org) and click there.

## Membership & Donations

### Welcome to our New Members:

Kristin Kwiatkowski of Cranberry Twp.  
Joseph & Emily Yzquierdo of Cranberry Twp.

Denis & Trudy Lukes of Zelianople  
Linda Radio of Harmony

### Welcome to our New Business Members:

Elizabeth Fortunato Glass Co. of Butler, and The Little Green Bookstore of Zelianople.

### Donations Gratefully Received from:

Sean Logue of Logue Law Group  
Patrick McMichael of Zelianople  
Gregg Peffer of Zelianople  
Borough of Zelianople  
Ebert Family Trust  
Southern Butler Co. Garden Club

Tom Murray of Zelianople  
Gerald Magill & Anne Campbell of Harmony  
Vic & Brenda Peffer of Zelianople  
Eagle Printing Co. of Butler  
Iroquois Foundation

### Memorial Donations:

Lisa Rosenbloom in memory of Virginia Passavant Henderson  
Lucia Marion in memory of Virginia Passavant Henderson

### We regret the passing of the following ZHS members and send condolences for:

Dr. Jeff Davis Aronsohn of Zelianople on Jan 17, 2024.  
Velma Peffer Hollerman of Harmony on Jan 14, 2024.  
Jeff Thomas of Fombell, life member on 1/2/24.  
Della Arvilla "Arby" Shenesky of Zelianople on Jan 16, 2024, museum docent and ZHS board member.

## Upcoming Events

**The Spring Tea** - The ZHS annual Spring Tea will be held on April 6th at St. Peter's Church, 320 E. Grandview Ave. from 1 - 3 pm. There will be a program and a Chinese auction.

Tickets will go on sale starting March 1st at the Passavant House and the cost is \$ 25 each. Marietta Reeb has the details. Call our office at 724.452.9457 or Marietta at 724.452.6471 or email the office at [zeliehistory@zoominternet.net](mailto:zeliehistory@zoominternet.net).

**Open Air Thursdays** - Don't forget that Zelig's Open-Air Thursdays will be starting May 2nd.

**Future 2024 Events:** May 4th - Garden Talk and Brunch at St. Peter's Church.

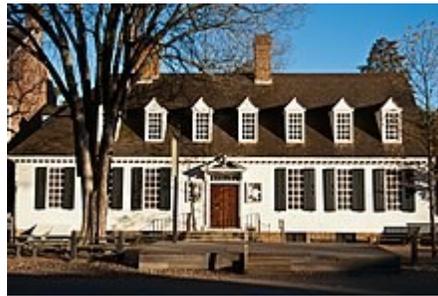
June 5th - ZHS Annual Dinner and Membership Meeting.

July 18, 19, 20 - Horse Trading Days with ZHS participating.

## **"Ye Olde Tavern" - A Vital Link to Our Past**

by Tom Nesbitt

*America's first taverns were known as "ordinaries." American colonists built them throughout New England, basing them on the English version of the tavern. By the 1640s, taverns had spread throughout the colonies, and the Virginia Assembly was already monitoring and regulating them. The taverns in Colonial America were a major force in our culture. The roles they fulfilled as places of refreshment, hostels for travelers, places of entertainment, and meeting places for the most influential people in a town, were necessary for the well being of a community. The word tavern derives from the Latin "taberna" whose original meaning was a shed, workshop, or pub. (wikipedia.org)*



Left to Right: The above photos show the Buckman Tavern in Lexington, MA where the first shots of the American Revolution were fired, the Raleigh Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg, and the White Horse Tavern in Newport, Rhode Island, the oldest tavern in the USA, dating from 1673.



**The Kaufman Tavern** is Zelenople's best known landmark. It started as the McClure Tavern in 1810. Over the years it was enlarged and renamed several times. John Randolph renamed it the Cross Keys Tavern in 1820, and in 1859 William Bastian renamed it the Bastian House. In 1888, Henry Stokey enlarged it further and named it the Grand Central Hotel, as shown in the photo above-left. In 1902, a fire in the bakery next door caused the total loss of several buildings, including the Grand Central. Stokey rebuilt the brick hotel in 1903, as shown in the photo above-right. E.F. Kaufman improved the hotel in 1924 and renamed it the Kaufman Hotel. It was renamed again as the Kaufman House when owned by William Thomas in 1944 and by Ken Pilarski in 1974. Despite a fire in 2011, it was restored by Patrick Boylan and reopened as the Kaufman Tavern in 2020, to the delight of everyone in town.



The Golden Eagle Hotel at 118 S. Main St. was built in 1825 by Rudolph Kelker. It was a tavern and hostel along the stagecoach road from Pittsburgh to Erie.

He operated the tavern for many years, then retired to a farm in Evans City. The photo above-left is from 1888, where owner Charles Stokey is leaning on the Lager Beer sign in the center. The Eagle Hotel was built in the 1820s by Rudolph Kelker. For fifty years it was an old-time caravansary, carried on by various landlords in the quaint manner of the Mercer road tavern-keepers. In 1878 Henry Stokey moved here from Evans City, purchased the old building, and introduced modern hotel-keeping. Charles Stokey, his son, is now landlord. The History of Butler County, 1895, p. 403. The hotel was torn down during the 1930s, as seen in the photo above-right. (Blair Zeigler Collection)

HOTEL STOKEY TAKEN IN 1888  
CASPER BLOOM BLACKSMITH WAS LEANING AGAINST POLE - HE WAS JAMES BLOOM'S GRANDFATHER. & LILA FLOWERS GRANDFATHER  
CHARLES STOKEY LEANING ON LAGER BEER SIGN. (2017.2.104)  
BUILDING BUILT IN 1825 BY RUDOLPH KELKERS & WAS 1ST KNOWN AS THE GOLDEN EAGLE, THEN THE STOKEY HOTEL, IT WAS REMOVED IN 1935  
NOW HAWKS + ZELIE FINANCE PARKING LOT. Blair Zeigler Collection

Blair Zeigler's personal notes on the hotel.



A Gulf Station was located here in the 1950s.

### WAR VETERAN DIES.

Rudolph Kelker Said to be the Oldest Survivor of the Civil War at the Time of His Death.

Rudolph Kelker, the father of Mrs. Webster Justice of North Beaver street, died Feb. 4th at his home in Evans City, Pa.; in his 91st year. Mr. Kelker was a member of the Fifth Pennsylvania Cavalry during the Civil War and is said to have been at the time of his death the oldest survivor of the war. He was born at Lebanon, Pa.; Dec. 1st, 1803, and leaves to survive him besides Mrs. Justice three other children viz Mrs Helen Wolf of Evans City, Mrs. Andrew Fraser of Carson City, Nev; and James P. Kelter of New York City.

Mr. Kelker was buried at Evans City Thursday. Mr. and Mrs. Justice being present at the funeral services.

Rudolph Kelker (1803-1895) lived to the age of 91, as reported in the *New Castle News* of Feb 8, 1894. He may have been the oldest Civil War Veteran in our local area, and is buried in the Zelenople Cemetery.



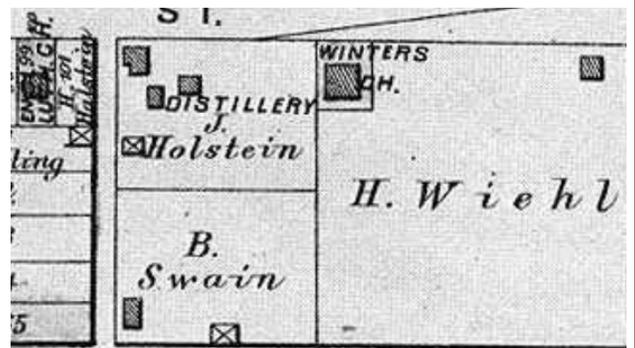
Zelienople's Last Old-Time Inn still survives at 310 E. Grandview Ave.

Anyone driving past this well-restored house along East Grandview Ave. would comment that it looks as if the owners have taken great care of it, but there is much more to the story than that. This great looking house was actually built in 1845 as an inn and hotel along the stagecoach road to Butler and Mercer (the Mercer Road went through Harmony back then). It was moved to this location in 1902.

In October of 1844, John & Mary Holstein bought 1.5 acres of land at the corner of E. Grandview and Oliver Avenues for \$737.00. They probably built this impressive hotel the following year. It was run as a tavern and hotel by the Holsteins for 50 years. John was both a brewer of beer and a distiller of whiskey per US census records. The map below from 1874 shows the distillery next to St. Peter's Church (Winters) and the Hyacinth Wiehl property running all the way to Division Street.



Notice the double corbels at the roof line on the structure. These have been used for centuries for both decorative and structural reasons. They are not readily found on houses, but this was built as a hotel.





One of the upstairs rooms has been exposed to enable viewing of the interior wall construction. After the hotel was moved to this location in 1902, it was used as a home for several families. The Edwin Zehner Funeral Parlor was here and the extra large door on the side of the house was for moving caskets in and out. Then John and Carl Glenn lived there and were undertakers with Mr. Zehner. In 1950, Robert Heasley and his family lived there. He was the branch manager of the local Mellon Bank. I don't think anyone ever saw him when he was not fully dressed in his three-piece suit and tie.

In 1992, this home was purchased by Rich & Juanita Eppinger and their son Tim. The Eppingers enlarged the house in the rear, with additional living space and bathrooms. It took them over 2 years to complete the restoration work that needed to be done to convert the house into a B & B. This was very close to the original purpose of the hotel in 1845. They named the various rooms after the former owners: Holstein, Zimmerman, Zehner, Glenn, Heasley, Eppinger etc.

In 2006, the Butler County Tourism & Convention Bureau bought the B&B and relocated their offices.



*Operating on a budget of approximately \$2 million, the Bureau is funded by a tax on hotel stays and generates millions of dollars in revenue from visitors. The county's top attraction is Moraine State Park which receives more than two million visitors each year. Each June, thousands of Jeep enthusiasts come to Butler County for the Bantam Jeep Heritage Festival. [www.visitbutlercounty.com](http://www.visitbutlercounty.com)*

The Board is composed of members from the community representing thirteen different business sectors within the travel and tourism industry, and headed by President Jack Cohen. (photo below)

Jack is set to retire in July after over 20 years of service to Butler Co. He and his staff bring tourism and tourists to Butler County on an ever-increasing basis.

We think the former Holstein / Zimmerman Hotel will be in great hands well into the future.



## **The Sad Story of Ulrich Zimmerman 1823-1881 (with the Holstein Hotel)**

The house at 310 E. Grandview used to be on the corner of Grandview and Oliver Ave. The two story frame building was first known as the Zimmerman Hotel. There was a man named Ulrich Zimmerman who operated a Hack Line between Harmony, Zelienople, and Rochester (the nearest railroad in those days). He carried the mail and passengers who wished to get in touch with the outside world from the backwoods. I do not know if he owned the hotel. In the rear of the hotel was a large distillery. The hotel changed hands and was then known as the Holstein Hotel. "The History of Grandview Ave." by Nell Campbell, 1948. Courthouse records do not show Ulrich Zimmerman ever owning the hotel, but he may have been the manager, as his name was associated with it. (A hack or hackney was a type of sturdy, horse-drawn coach that served as a taxi and mail delivery vehicle).

**Untimely Death of Mr. Zimmerman:** My father Ulrich Zimmerman was a huckster, driving a covered wagon around the country collecting what farmers wanted to sell. By Saturday, he would have a wagon load of produce and drive to Pittsburgh at 2am to get there when the markets opened. In 1874, my father started a stage-line operation between Harmony, Zelienople, and Rochester to the nearest railroad there. If there were too many passengers for one coach, we had to send out a second one. He also carried US mail to Rochester, via the Unionville Hill road. On June 22, 1881, a convention of ministers was held in Zelienople and that day we put two coaches on the run for the ministers to catch the train in Rochester. Father and I had an agreement that when a late passenger wished to catch a train, I was to take the New Brighton road which is not as hilly. My father did not know of this late passenger. When he could not see me following him, he handed the reins over to a passenger and started walking back to find me. After arriving in Rochester without my father, both coaches traveled back towards Zelienople and we found father dead along the road. The cause of death was supposed to be heat prostration and a heart condition which is found in my family. William Zimmerman (1868-1961). Information provided by his descendant Frances Edmonston.

Mr. Zimmerman had carried the mail and passengers over the above route for twenty years, during which time he had made many friends who will regret to learn of his sudden demise. The funeral of Mr. Zimmerman was perhaps the largest ever seen here. He was universally respected by all classes and everyone turned out to do honor to his memory. "The Butler Citizen," June 29, 1881.



Ulrich Zimmerman was born in Germany, married Anna Meisel, and had 14 children. They both died in 1881 and are buried in our local cemetery.

His son William moved to Montana and had a farm and ranch there.



John Holstein	37	m	Brewer	1200	Germany
Mary	"	37	f		"
Elizabeth	"	8	f		Pa
Mary	"	6	f		"

The 1850 US Census: John Holstein, age 37, Brewer, \$1200 in assets, from Germany, with his family. John Holstein owned the hotel until 1898 when he sold it to Gellert Goehring who sold it to Nelson Duncan for \$3500 in 1902. Nelson Duncan was an oil producer during the local oil boom that occurred in our area. He promptly moved the old hotel from 302 E. Grandview to 310 E. Grandview. This was accomplished with horsepower (literally).



With the rapid railway and urban development boom, a lot of people found themselves looking to relocate their houses and mansions, and it looks like all they needed were some powerful horses. The house was jacked up off its foundation and was placed on heavy wooden beams. The ends of these beams were pointed and tended to act as runners similar to those on a sleigh. A temporary wooden track was put down in the street and the greased runners slid along it.

The track consisted of flat planks, supported by cross ties, similar to those used on railroad tracks. As the house inched along the street, the planks and ties left behind were picked up and manually carried to the front of the house and laid down ahead of it. The moving of houses, churches, and schools was briefly a big industry in the Victorian Era. ([www.rarehistoricalphotos.com](http://www.rarehistoricalphotos.com))

By 1904, Nelson B. & Susan Duncan had built a much larger and more stately home at 302 Grandview, with a stone foundation, brick exterior, slate roof, and all the best wood and plaster materials inside the house. One can tell the quality of this home just by viewing the outside. There is a full basement, two floors of living space, and a walk-up, finished attic where dances and parties were held. Even the stairway landing has a seating area within the front bay window.

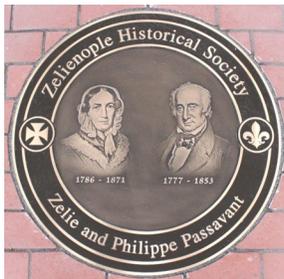
Later their son Arnold G. & Nancy Duncan lived in the house and Arnold had his dentist office located here through a side door on Oliver Ave. during the 1930s and 1940s.

This home was very nicely decorated for Christmas and was on the historical society's home tour. It's one of Zelenople's finest Victorian homes.



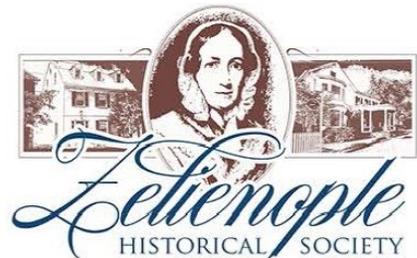
Zelienople Historical Soc.  
243 S. Main Street  
Zelienople, PA 16063

Address correction requested.



**ZHS Vision Statement:**

Respecting Our Heritage  
Reaffirming Our Values  
Revitalizing Our Community



**ZHS Office Hours:**

9 AM – Noon, Mon.- Fri.

Tours can be scheduled by appointment by calling ZHS. Use of the Lester Mohr Library is by appointment.

Please call 724.452.9457 to make arrangements.

Office is closed Jan. & Feb.

**Dues Renewals July 1st - June 30th**

- Annual Business \$50
- Annual Family \$35
- Annual Individual \$20
- Annual Student \$5

Please send a check to ZHS at 243 S. Main St., Zelienople, PA 16063

Email: [zeliehistory@zoominternet.net](mailto:zeliehistory@zoominternet.net)

**Additional contributions:**

- General Fund
- Passavant House
- Buhl House
- Other (please specify)

As we are a 501(c)3 non-profit, your contribution may be tax deductible. Thank you !

Phone: 724.452.9457