

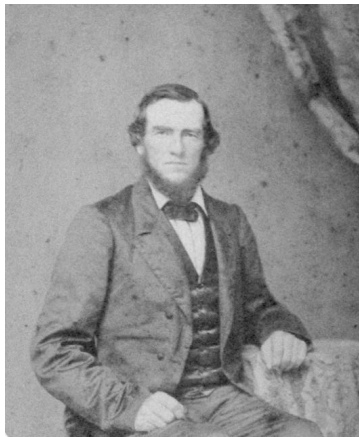
A Granddaughter and a Barn, 120 years later

by

Michael & Carol Manbeck

Owning property with vintage buildings comes with a level of responsibility, a responsibility to preserve the history and memories they embody as best we can. Sometimes those moments long since passed are significant. Sometimes they are just everyday life that, at the time, seem mundane or meaningless. But, many years later as we learn or recall them, they turn into treasures, a glimpse into life in the past or a trail of things that would become significant to future generations.

My wife Carol and I are blessed to own such a property on Airport Road in Buffalo Township just west of Lewisburg for the last 21 years. Our house was originally commissioned and owned by Joseph Wheeler Shriners in the mid 1860's, although the property certainly had other existing buildings when he purchased it. Most likely the barn predates the house.



Joseph Wheeler Shriners (November 12, 1824 – March 15, 1897) and
Ann Elizabeth Kremer Shriners (December 4, 1824 – April 19, 1905)

Joseph W. Shriners's life is outlined well in many sources like the *History of the Susquehanna and Juniata Valleys of Pennsylvania*, *Directory of Prominent Business Places in Lewisburg*, *The Industries of Pennsylvania*, *Union County a Bicentennial History* and obituaries. It is clear that Joseph Shriners was a prominent figure in the local business world in the late 1800's. His endeavors include partner in Geddes, Marsh & Company who built the Dry Valley iron

furnace in Winfield, partner in Slifer, Walls & Shriner, manufacturers of farm machinery in Lewisburg, and operator of Lewisburg Water Mills, a feed mill in Buffalo Township at the site most recently known as Campbell's Mill. Mr. Shriner also operated a dairy farm in Buffalo Township adjacent to the mill.

Joseph and his wife Ann Elizabeth had nine children, only three of which survived into adulthood. One of their daughters, Sarah Julia, married Rev. Dr. John Wesley Rue a Methodist minister. My wife and I had the great fortune of making the acquaintance of Sarah and John's grandson, John (Jack) Wesley Rue II and his wife Helen in 2002. Jack was an historian and keeper of many family artifacts. He valued the genuine interest Carol and I had in our property and its history. He was eagerly willing to share all he had and knew. One item that I found particularly interesting was an essay his aunt, Elizabeth Rue, wrote as a 14-year-old girl in 1897. She titled it "My Grandfather's Barn." It was presumably a school assignment and was written after Joseph's death. Please enjoy a glimpse into the past through the eyes and spirit of a teenage girl in the closing days of the 19th Century.



Shriner Barn in the late 1800's as it would have looked to Elizabeth

My Grandfather's Barn (Joseph Shriner, Lewisburg, PA)**By Elizabeth Rue (age 14)****October 21, 1897**

I have always lived a great ways from my grandfather's farm, and, of course when I visit there it is always a great source of joy to me. To get out in the country and walk in the beautiful lanes and play on the grass almost any child, that lives in the city, would enjoy it. We were always playing a great many new games and doing a great many things new to us, but one we enjoyed the most was playing in the barn.

In my grandfather's barn, one section of the building was used for the carriage house, and in this was the carriage, two buggies, a milk wagon, two farm wagons, two sleighs called cutters, and one very large sleigh, beside a hay wagon, and the funniest kind of a buggy I ever saw, we children called it the "ark".

This ark was a very high buggy that had been used long, long ago, I am not sure but that it belonged to my great, great grandfather. It was so old and rickety we were not allowed to get in it for fear of it coming down with us.

We each one used to take a carriage to our self, and call them our houses, the big carriage was the church, the milk wagon was a store, because it had a money drawer in it, and so went on and named all the wagons.

I remember one day above all the others which I will tell you about, now our grandmother had forbidden us to go up in the hay mow, but this day which I am speaking of grandma had gone to town and our nurse said we might go to the barn with our dollies but be sure and don't get in the ark, never thinking about telling us not to go in the hay mow.

We played with our dolls a while, but we soon got tired of it for one of the boys had been quarrelling with another one and of

course you know that is never interesting to girls, so we took our dolls out for a walk around the barn, now the carriage house opens right out on the road, and to get to the other side of the barn you had to open a big gate or either climb the fence and we girls didn't propose to do that.

So we went through the gate and of course never closed it and the cows got out and did a great deal of damage. We went in the great sliding door past the threshing machine and engine and all the other machinery, to where stood a great pile of straw and up this we crept until we came to the second floor. All the while we were climbing the straw the boys (for they of course had followed us) were trying to scare us by saying that there was a snake in the hay, but we girls did not scare the way the boys wished us to, for we hurried upstairs instead of going back. As there was a new cousin with us we took her through the granaries and then to another door, of which outside, down a few feet was an immense hay stack, onto which we all jumped.

I will never forget what a delightful sensation one has in dropping through the air, no swing was ever equal to it. We forgot all about the time until someone called, lookout here comes your grandfather down the lane. My but we did scamper but it was too late, we were caught. And we were treated something like the old woman in the shoe treated her children, we were given some bread and milk and some hickory oil (Do you know what that is?) and put to bed, where we remained until next morning. Thus ended my happiest experience in "My Grandfather's Barn".

She was born Julia Elizabeth Rue in 1883. After writing this essay she went on to study at Lycoming College (Williamsport) and Pennsylvania College (Gettysburg) to become a teacher. She married Samuel Arnold Helmbold on June 20, 1907 and had two children, William Clark (1908) and Margaret Louise (1909).

She taught in Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Delaware. She died in 1968 a resident of Wilmington, DE.



Sarah Shriner Rue, William Clark Helmbold, Elizabeth Rue Helmbold
(Photo from the collection of Alexandra Genetti, step-daughter of William Helmbold)

It is my hope that what is now “my barn” can continue to generate the kind of memories expressed by Elizabeth. Maybe even for my grandchildren.



Manbeck Barn in 2012 after renovations

Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize the late Jack and Helen Rue of Easton, MD for preserving the history and memories of Joseph Shriner and his descendants. It was through their care and efforts that we have the pictures of Joseph and Ann and their homestead, and the essay by Elizabeth. I would also like to thank Alexandra Genetti of Sonoma County, CA for providing pictures and additional information for Elizabeth Rue's life and descendants.