

Coming Out of the Closet The TEHS Archive Relocation

Kathy King and Mike Bertram

Since the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society's inception as the T. E. History Club it has received archival material. Much of the material was donated, while some was collected. There are photographs, newspaper clippings, sorted and unsorted files of documents, and some unusual items. Among the stranger items are historical United States flags, an old broken Berwyn sign, and very large format photographs from the old Acme store in Berwyn. Until recently there had also been a gravestone, but that has been returned to its proper place in a local graveyard. More on that story in a future issue. Barbara Fry described the contents of the archives in a 1997 article in the *Quarterly*¹.

The Old Place - The Closet

The History Club's archives resided in Bob Goshorn's home when he died in 1995, and a new quarters had to be found. The Tredyffrin-Easttown School District offered the club storage space in the Educational Resources Building (the old Berwyn Primary School next to the Easttown Library) and the club moved the archives to that building, in a space known to Society leadership as The Closet. The School District is now planning to close the building, and last year asked the Society to find a new location for the archives.

The archives were stored in a set of filing cabinets in a corridor and in a small closet with shelving in an adjacent room.



The hallway filing cabinets. *All photographs by Kathy King, December 2009 & January 2010.*



The Closet was small and quite cozy for more than one person. At the left, that one person is co-author and interim archivist Mike Bertram.

The New Digs

Society President Roger Thorne found the new accommodations for the archives at Public Storage on Swedesford Road. The Society is renting a secured, climate-controlled, 10 by 15 foot unit at a cost of \$1700 per year.





The new “closet” at Public Storage. Note the map cabinet at left.

After consolidating the archived materials and winnowing out duplicate copies, the archives were moved on January 13, 2010. The team helping with the consolidation and move included Society volunteers Jim Brazel, Herb Fry, Bonnie Haughey, Jean and George Harlow, John Senior, Roger Thorne, Kathy King, and Mike Bertram, as well as staff from the School District.

During the consolidation of the material, documents that had been buried in the collection came to light. There are a number of interesting maps which are rolled up. Also there are a number of original parchment deeds, including four from the 18th century. Michael Morrison has donated a map cabinet so these documents can now be kept flat.

The archives contain some very interesting material, but their usefulness is limited by the haphazard organization. A team comprising Rick Belber, Mike Bertram, Barbara and Norman Craig, and Michael Morrison has started work on improving the organization of the archives. The goal is to improve the accessibility of the material by publishing an index to the contents of the archives on the Society web site. Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped the Society “come out of the closet.”

¹ Barbara Fry, “What Do We Have in the Archives?”, *Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society History Quarterly*, Berwyn, Pennsylvania, Volume 35, Number 3, July 1997, pp. 97-108.