

## The Light in the Window

As man calculates time it was September 5, 2011. The tentacles of darkness had already encircled the Stone Arabia landscape. I looked out of the east kitchen window just as I had for 63 years. Then I realized there was something different out there. It was the light of a kerosene lamp feebly piercing the darkness from the window of the new Amish house.

I had been watching the house being built for the last few days. The cellar was dug on the second of August and the building had been coming into being like a mushroom ever since. There were always lots of workmen doing all of the tasks necessary to create the new house. Then in a sometimes falling rain hay wagons and buggies brought the possessions of the young couple. It was moving day. This was Ernest and Emma's first night in their new home. It was their light announcing to the world that they had moved in that I saw.

To someone like myself who has a lifetime of interest in the past and also one in the present and future that many thoughts come forth. This house is only the second to be built on this old farm in over 200 years. Probably the one before those two would have been burned on October 19, 1780 when Crown forces and Indians burned the young settlement. At about that time I thought about the Kerosene lamp that had produced that light I saw. It was the kind of illumination that everyone a hundred or so years ago would have used. My Amish friends still use it. Reaching back in time that light would be made by whale oil, tallow candles, grease lamps and even pine knots.

That thought shocked me back to the present with the realization that my electric kitchen light had been on the blink for the last few days. Oh well my electrician friend Dick or Brock are coming soon.

Then another thought came to mind. In the last few days only a few miles to the east and in the Schoharie Valley where my Palatine ancestors had once settled residents had undergone a tragedy. Flood and wind had swept away their homes and outbuildings, some of them centuries old. Hanging over these structures were ancient and modern dreams of people just like Ernest and Emma. They will have to start over and we wish them God speed. The parallels of everyday life are astounding.

Good luck and long life Ernest and Emma. I hope your light shines bright for many years.

Skip Barshied

Stone Arabia

September 6, 2011