



Celebration of 60/30 Anniversary

The Barn Years

Before coming to Franklin, Jake and Elizabeth DeBence were dairy farmers in Centertown (near Slippery Rock). Our volunteer, Lois Follstaedt often visited the DeBence dairy farm in Centertown when staying with her college roommate's parents, who lived next to the farm. When Jake and Elizabeth moved to Franklin in 1964, they realized their dream of opening a museum.

From 1964-1994 the collection was in Jake and Elizabeth's barn. Originally, Jake installed the collection in the lower level of a 2-story barn, but later built a large pole barn to house the collection. People stopped in, Jake told stories and played machines for folks. There were extension cords, sometimes, puffs of smoke and sparks, but Jake knew how to keep the music playing.

Our volunteer, Quinn Findlan remembers her family visiting with family guests. Jake often presented her younger brother with an extra member of the "frog band," the remaining members are currently on display on the first floor.

Our retired teacher volunteers, Caroll Gehres and Lois Follstaedt, remember bringing their elementary school students to the barn for class trips. Elizabeth danced with one young man and made his day!

Toward 1990, Jake 'made noises' about wanting to sell the collection. Dale Wilson and Frank Huff approached him about it, but 'naaaah', Jake didn't want to sell.

Rumors started about an out-of-town sale, so Dale and Frank approached Jake again, but 'naaaah', Jake didn't want to sell.

Antique Music Museum & Old Country Store

JAKE & ELIZABETH DEBENCE.

— WE BUY RESTORED OR UNRESTORED —

*Antique Coin Operated Music Devices

* Orchestrons * Nickelodions

— WE BUY & SELL ANTIQUES —

1675 Pittsburgh Road, On Route 8, 2 Miles South Of

FRANKLIN, PENN'A.

Phone Area Code 814 - 437-6301

Jake passed away in 1992. A group of concerned citizens were now more concerned about keeping the collection in Franklin. Elizabeth would no longer give tours without Jake, and rumors were flying about an overseas sale.

One day--the right day--Dale and Frank asked Elizabeth again, and she said yes to selling the collection. The price and terms were set. The original group of community members went about fundraising to make the collection a part of the Franklin downtown experience. Several people made 5-figure donations to the project. Mrs. Jesse Peters made significant donations **twice** to ensure the project's completion.

Moving the collection from the barn to the G.C. Murphy building was a challenging task. Paul McKissick (who was newly retired) worked a 40-hour work week for about a year getting the machines playing.

DeBence Antique Music World Begins

DeBence Antique Music World as we know it today began in 1994. Mrs. Jane Cochran was the first President of the Board of Directors, and Franklin's group of concerned citizens became the first Board of Directors with Lynn Zilmer as the manager.

1993 Oil Region Music Preservation Museum Board of Directors & Officers

President: Paul R. McKissick

Vice President: William D. Wilson, esq.

Secretary: James M. Greenfield, esq.

Treasurer: Christine W. Ross

Assistant Secretary: Daniel J. Hardesty

Members: Dale H. Wilson, Robert L. Miller, and Catherine Teig

Early years saw many bus tours come through. In 2004 we started giving 4th-grade tours through the Justus Trust to introduce students to the world of mechanical music. Through the support of the McElhattan Foundation and others we have been able to host free museum days over Applefest weekend.

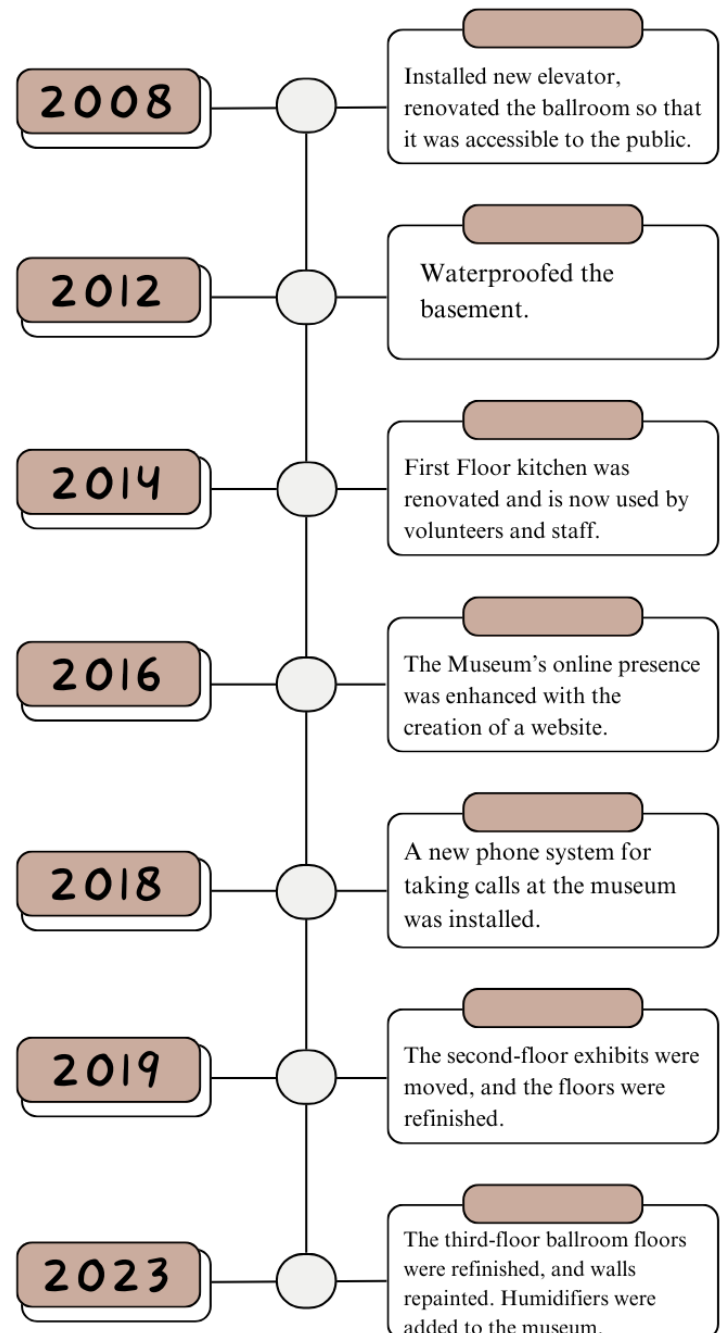
The third Sunday of the month mini events were held on the third floor through the Rees Trust. Local artists including the Greenville High School Steel Drums, Mostly Brass, Joyful Noise, Dennis Geib, Venango Brigade, and many others have performed.

From 2018-2020 the museum held an annual 40's swing band dance with the Bill Beggs Band as a fundraiser in the ballroom during Franklin-on-Ice weekend. We continue to rent the third floor for private or community functions.

GC Murphy Building

The building was in rough shape when the non-profit bought it. The first floor and basement had been used by Murphy's for sales and displays. The second and third floors were used as storage. However, the freight elevator, which opened to the alley, was good news for moving pianos.

The building was updated greatly by Rick Cotter and several retired Joy engineers. They refinished the wood floors on the second and third stories, insulated the basement walls, added the correct lighting, security lighting, sprinklers, outlets, everything that was needed. The updated elevator was installed as part of an ORA grant in 2008.



DeBence Antique Music World 2024-2054

To start the next 30 years, the DeBence Museum has hired Cassady Calder as our new director. Her undergraduate degree is in business and communications. Combined

with a master's degree in museum studies, she brings a plethora of experience from several other museums.

The museum has also hired Vince Bastecki as Assistant to the Director. Vince has been volunteering for eight years and has been the lead docent for quite a while. He has recently been working on improving the humidity levels in the building to ensure our machines play well in the cold, in addition to other projects.

Cassady's first projects with the museum board is putting together a strategic plan because the next 30 years "will not be the same as the last 30 years." In addition, the museum was recently accepted into the AAM's Museum Assessment Program to provide direction as to how we can improve the care of the collection.

QRS, a player piano company out of Seneca, is currently working with the DeBence on a potential display of their new technology recording music digitally with their Story & Clark player pianos. The museum holds many historic examples of Story & Clark manufacture. Hopefully more details of this partnership will be forthcoming.

Celebration activities

The museum opened for the season on Tuesday, April 2, 2024. Our actual celebration weekend will be Saturday/Sunday April 20th and 21st. We are planning an open mic night and a band to celebrate. Watch Facebook for details.

Newsletter via email

If you would be interested in receiving the newsletter via email, please let us know by emailing debencemuseum@verizon.net. This will hopefully help us save printing and postage in the future and we are currently working to set this feature up.

Please consider filling in the appropriate blanks and returning your fully tax-deductible donation. Thank you for your past interest and we look forward to hearing from you. You may use Visa or MasterCard if you prefer.

Around the Museum and Updates to the Collection

The ballroom had a major facelift with grant money from the Rowley Trust. The floors were refinished, the risers and walls were painted. Our volunteers Beverly and Matt Lehman were kind enough to donate and help install new drapes and rods to provide a finished look to the ballroom.

This winter the first-floor kitchen's hot water heater was found to be leaking and was replaced. The museum purchased three humidifiers to increase the first-floor humidity in winter and prevent the inevitable machine breakdown due to the dry air.

Wishlist for operations

There are many needs at the museum, just like at your home. We are currently in need of a new sandwich board, an 'OPEN' sign, extension cords, and other needs.

Our Opportunities & Wishlist

We have set up gift list/registries at Amazon and Walmart. These work much like wedding registries. When searching for our wish list/registry you must use our name – DeBence Antique Music World.

If you would like to be part of the next 30 years at DeBence Antique Music World we are always looking for volunteers in all areas; machine repair and mechanics, secretary work, docents, education, woodworking, and more. Whatever your interest or passion we would be happy to have you!

We invite those of you who are not now sustaining members to join us. Members can receive free admission on visits to the museum! Annual memberships.

Individual-\$35	Family-\$50
Edison Club-\$100	Music Box Club-\$250
Nickelodeon-\$500	Calliope Club-\$1,000

**Yes, I'd like to help you out with the building renovation and instrument restorations.
Yes, I'd like to join one of your Annual Clubs! Please note which level.**

Name _____ **Club Name** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **email** _____

Card Type (Circle one) M/C or Visa _____ **Card Number** _____

Expiration Date _____ **Cardholder please sign here** _____

Security Code (from back of card) _____

Mail to DeBence Antique Music World, 1261 Liberty Street. Franklin, PA, 16323

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Franklin, PA, 16323

Your DeBence Newsletter