

# Memories of Behrend

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What do you call this place when you are asked where you go to school? Do you call it Penn State or the Behrend College? How about Penn State-Behrend?

My point is that about 75% of the time, the word Behrend comes up. How much do we know about the mysterious Behrend family?

The only thing that I really knew about the Behrends when I came here was what I read on that little sign between the Turnbull Barn and the Glenhill Farmhouse, which is as informative as a cereal box.

During the Labor Day weekend, I started wondering about the Behrends. I started wondering why anyone would give up their home and all of their land to people they didn't even know, especially people our age!!

Well, just like my first column, it started me on another quest, so I talked to Mr. Ben Lane who has been a member of the Behrend community since it was founded in 1948.

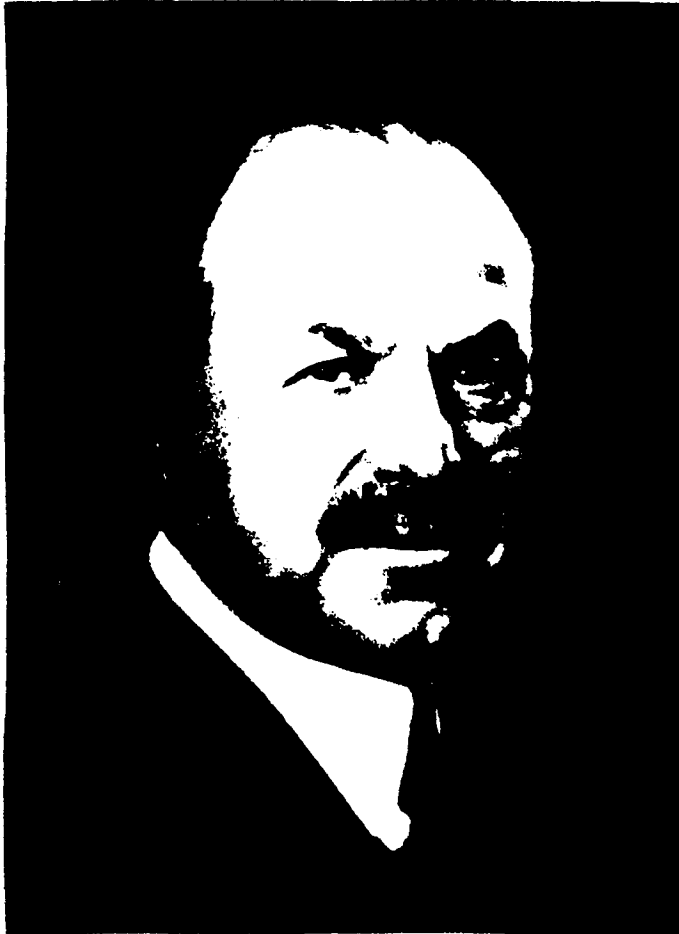
## How much do we know about the mysterious Behrend family?

The story begins with the three sons of an extremely successful papermill owner leaving their native home of Germany to live in the United States. The three brothers came to America in 1898 and moved to the Erie area.

I bet you have probably guessed who the brothers were so let me tell you a little about them. The first brother was Bernard Behrend and he had a vast knowledge of mechanical engineering. The second brother was Otto Behrend and he was a chemist. Ernst Behrend was an electrical engineer.

At this point in time, Erie was a small city with a population of about 60,000 residents. The brothers purchased 46 acres on Erie's eastern side for the incredible price of just \$150 an acre. The land soon became the sight of the Hammermill Paper Company, which is still located near Route 5.

Bernard Behrend left the organization after a few years and moved out of state. Bernard later became an internationally known designer of ship engines. Otto Behrend was the top chemist



Ernst Behrend

in the organization while Ernst became the chief executive.

The company grew and prospered, and in the mid '20s Ernst decided to purchase the Glenhill Farmhouse from the previous owners.

Ernst, who used to live on the same land that the company was on, first made the farmhouse his weekend cottage. After awhile it did become their full-time residence and in the 1930s it had as many as 35 people working full-time to manage it.

The estate consisted of the Glenhill Farmhouse, which is now the Administration Building. The Turnbull Barn was the Behrend's barn, which at one point housed as many as 17 horses.

The Behrend's garage and chauffeur's house was the Cottage House, which is now the Health and Wellness Center. The Behrends used the Studio Theater to host parties. It was also Mary Behrend's, Ernst's wife, studio where she painted.

The Behrends loved dogs and had many. Bruno, which our nightclub named is after, was a German Shepard and they also had two French Poodles. They also enjoyed the water and had the pool put in during 1929. They also liked to sail and go skeet shooting.

The Behrends had a son and a daughter. Their daughter's name was Harriet and she died just a few years ago. Warren

was their son and apparent heir to the company but tragedy hit. In 1929, when Warren was 19, he was driving home for Christmas when he had a car accident and



Behrend today: What would Ernst and Mary think of it?

died. This caused much distress for the family and some say that Ernst never got over the loss. Ernst died in 1940.

After Ernst's death, Mary wanted to sell the property a few times because of all the memories it held, but she could never bring herself to do it.

At the same time in Erie, there was a group of people who wanted to bring a non-parochial alternative college

...stop and think about the man and his family for whom this institution was named.

into the area. These people went to University Park and asked if Penn State would consider putting an extension center in Erie, like the ones in Hazelton and Pottsville.

Penn State said that they would do it under two conditions. The first condition was that they would have to have a demographic breakdown of the Erie area to see if it was feasible, and the second was that the people would have to find a site for the center.

Rumor has it that these people then went to Mary and asked if she would consider selling her land for the institution. Mary said that she would think about it and a few weeks later she gave them her answer. She said that she wouldn't SELL them the land but instead just GAVE them the land. Mary moved to her daughter's in Connecticut, and in 1948 the Behrend Center came into being.

The first few years the

dollars to the institution. That was the largest amount ever given to Penn State by a single individual. The fact that the money went to Behrend instead of University Park, was very significant.

In 1962, the Otto Behrend Science building was constructed with the money that he donated. Otto died a few years later. The Reed Building, which was named for the Behrend's neighbors and close friends, and Perry Hall, which was named for the late Admiral Perry, were built in 1968.

Mary Behrend continued to visit the school until her death in the late '60s. She was always happy to meet the students and used to hold monthly meetings in the Memorial Room, which is located in the Glenhill Farmhouse. When the student population exceeded the room in the farmhouse she would meet in Erie Hall. She liked to know all of the students on a personal basis.

One of Ernst and Mary's grandchildren is on the Council of Fellows of International Paper (the new name for Hammermill Paper). The other grandson lives in New England and still visits the campus often.

Ernst Behrend was a major industrial figure in this

campus consisted of the buildings mentioned above. Classes were held mostly in the Cottage Houses and the Glenhill Farmhouse. The second floor of the Glenhill Farmhouse was a dormitory for women, and much of the teaching staff in lived Turnbull and the South Cottage House. In 1952 Erie Hall was erected and classes were held in there.

Otto Behrend, Ernst's brother, donated two million

country and one of the prime innovators in the making of paper. He had excellent relationships with his employees, and he gave their families toy and turkeys at Christmas. He was a man who gave freely of himself and cared.

I hope the next time you walk by the Glenhill Farmhouse, you stop and think of the man and his family for whom this institution was named.