



# The Half Moon

- The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association -

## Welcome

The Newtown Historic Association presents this newsletter to the Newtown community with the goal of providing news and information on related historic and preservation events in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

## Officers

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## Newtown Historic Association

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Phone: (215) 968-4004  
[www.newtownhistoric.org](http://www.newtownhistoric.org)

## Clean-Up Day

The annual Clean-up Day was held on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to all those who lent a helping hand!

## Annual Dues

The annual dues notices have been mailed to all active members. In an effort to continue our membership drive, members are encouraged to submit the names and addresses of potential new members to the Corresponding Secretary, Mary Callahan at [dcnhh@comcast.net](mailto:dcnhh@comcast.net).

## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Half Moon (Court) Inn. All members were invited. Reports will be given by the various committees. The meeting will include a lecture entitled, "History of the Antique Furniture of the Half Moon Inn" by Diana Barbera-Horwitz. The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

## New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Audrey Bernheimer & Ed Weir, *Newtown*
- Susan & Kevin Boyd, *Newtown*
- John & Beverly Carey, *Newtown*
- Peter & Tami Casey, *Newtown*
- Robert & Cindy Ciervo, *Newtown*
- Leonard Colavito, *Newtown*
- Michael & Patricia D'Arcangelo, *Newtown*
- Tom & Bronwyn Drotar, *Newtown*
- Gale Jefferson, *Newtown*
- Shawn & Susan Keen, *Newtown*
- Stephen & Audrey Kossayan, *Newtown*
- Michael & Christine Sciarotta, *Newtown*
- George & Wendy Ward, *Newtown*
- Michael & Susan Wert, *Newtown*

## Spring Cocktail Party

Invitations have been mailed for the annual spring cocktail party to be held on April 21<sup>st</sup> from 5-8 PM at the Half-Moon (Court) Inn. Take this opportunity to catch up with acquaintances, old and new. Tickets are \$35 per person. Join us for this wonderful event. For more information, contact Mary Callahan at (215) 968-3914 or [dcnhh@comcast.net](mailto:dcnhh@comcast.net).

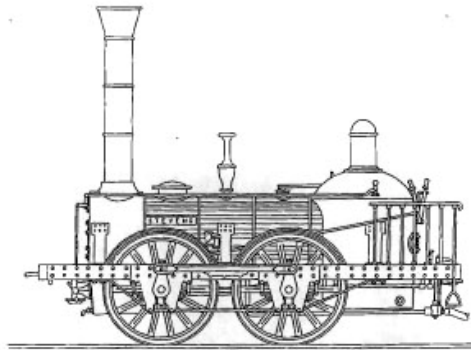
## Hicks Walking Tour

"Walk in the footsteps of Edward Hicks." See what Edward Hicks would have seen as he walked around town. Join us for a very informative stroll through the historic streets of Newtown at 6:30 PM on Friday, May 4th at the Half Moon (Court) Inn. Free admission. Refreshments will be served.

## Hicks Flower Show

The Countryside Gardeners will host an Edward Hicks themed Flower Show on May 4-5 at the Half Moon (Court) Inn. The show will be open from 2-9 PM on Friday, May 4th and from 10 AM - 12:30 PM on Saturday, May 5th. There will be a special class for members of the Newtown Historic Association, which will consist of a colorful arrangement of fresh plant material done in a coffee mug. The title is the Half Moon Inn (Court Inn). Accessories are permitted (which would be something in or next to the mug to carry out your display). Entries are to be in place by 10:00 AM on May 4th and removed by 12:30 PM on May 5th.

## The Newtown Railroad Revisited (Parts 1 & 2)



LOCOMOTIVE "JOHN BULL," ORIGINALLY NAMED "STEVENS,"  
OF THE CAMDEN & AMBOY RAILROAD,  
FIRST STEAM LOCOMOTIVE TO OPERATE IN THE  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY,  
NOVEMBER 12, 1831.

RICHARD N. MANSLEY JULY 1995

The March meeting of the Newtown Historic Association was held on Monday, March 19th at the Half-Moon (Court) Inn. The program featured a lecture entitled, "*The Newtown Railroad Revisited*" that was presented by Richard N. Mansley. Due to the overwhelming interest and positive response, the lecture was divided into two parts, the second of which was presented on Monday, March 26th.

Those in attendance were taken on a virtual tour of the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad as told in over 100 architectural, mechanical and civil engineering drawings from 2nd and Erie Avenue, Philadelphia to Newtown, including two connecting branches. The tour was arranged in chronological order from the Victorian Era of 1876 to the modern times of 1976.

Mr. Mansley has spent over 47 years researching and replicating the signs, stations and structures along the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad. His background as a mechanical draftsman was put to good use, as over the years he has completed over 100 scaled drawings (blueprints actually), each of which took an average of over 100 hours to complete, and are literally beautiful works of art. In order to gain the information necessary to begin each drawing, Mr. Mansley traveled the line, sometimes visiting the final resting places of the long abandoned train station buildings in swamps and fields, to intricately measure each structure for his notes.

The results of Mr. Mansley's extensive research can be found in the archives of the Newtown Historic Association. Mr. Mansley has donated 14 volumes of his research entitled, "*The Newtown Railroad Reel: A Chronicle of the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad*" compiled and edited by Richard N. Mansley, 1873-1929. Mr. Mansley compiled the 14-volume history of the Newtown Branch of the Railroad by combing through numerous newspapers, periodicals and printed resources. His extensive history is definitive in the sense that it tells the story of the Newtown Branch of the Railroad as it unfolded. Interspersed into the facts are his many intricately scaled drawings and other images that help tell this fascinating story.

The Newtown Railroad station stood on Lincoln Avenue in Newtown from 1878 until 1967, when the New Hope and Ivyland Railroad made a disastrous attempt to move the station to Buckingham. However, the job proved to be beyond their capabilities and the project was abandoned.

At the conclusion of the second part of his lecture, Mr. Mansley was presented with a limited edition print of the Newtown Station that was donated by the well-known local artist, Craig Hackett.



"Newtown Station" a limited edition by Craig Hackett

[Compiled by Brian Rounsavill. For more information on the Newtown Station, refer to the [June 1997 issue of the Half Moon](#), from which much of this information was obtained.]

## The Train Keeps a Rollin'... Spending a Day with George M. Hart



*George Hart and his steam locomotive No. 972 in 1966.*

Newtown Historic Association members David Callahan, Frank Fabian and Brian Rounsavill had the good fortune to spend a beautiful spring day recently with former Newtown resident, George M. Hart. Renown as the founding Director of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and a railroad historian of the first magnitude, George Hart amassed a lifetime collection of negatives, photographs and artifacts with an emphasis on Pennsylvania's railroads.

Born in Doylestown, Hart was educated at Buckingham Friends School and the George School, graduating in 1937. He has worn a myriad of hats including that of historian, educator, museum director, short line railroad executive, and railroader over many years. He has memories of boyhood hours spent at the Reading Company depot in his hometown of Doylestown, Pa., watching ten-wheel Camelbacks being reversed on the turntable.

After auditing classes at University of Pennsylvania and briefly teaching history as a member of the George School History Department, he became Assistant Business Manager and Treasurer at his alma mater, George School, in 1941. He held this position for twenty-three years. The school adjoined the Reading's Newtown branch, which afforded Hart numerous opportunities to further his interest in railroad history and train photography.

In 1941, he helped compile through exhaustive research the fiftieth anniversary *History of George School*, published in 1943. During his years in Newtown, he was an active volunteer fireman in the Newtown Fire Company (1952-1964). Here, he befriended Joseph Schmitt, the Reading Company agent at the George School station and the two struck up a lifelong friendship. Hart often photographed the endless parade of freight and passenger trains on the Newtown Line, which skirted the school property, from 1933 until 1938, and again from 1941 until 1964. Scores of these postcard-size images are in the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania archives.

In 1964, Hart removed from Newtown and founded *Rail Tours, Inc.* which operated weekend steam-powered excursions on leased portions of the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1969, Hart was appointed as the Director of the first state-operated railroad museum in the United States, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pa. Following his departure as Director Emeritus from the Railroad Museum in 1983, George continued his railroading interests as President and General Manager of the Stewartstown Railroad, a quaint 7-mile short line in York County, Pa. which hauled freight and passengers. Today, he still serves in this capacity. At age 88, he recently ended his program of Rail Tours weekend train excursions out of Jim Thorpe, Pa. since 1971.

In addition to railroad history, George's many interests have included collecting historic Willys-Knight automobiles, covered bridges, canals, photography, reading old newspaper files, weather forecasting, land conservation, firefighting and restoring old houses. A first-rate scholar, George has a remarkable encyclopedic memory of all things railroad, and has done much in the way of documenting the illustrious heritage of the railroads of Pennsylvania. His lifelong devotion to the cause of railroad history and preservation in the United States is immeasurable. We are all richer for his efforts.

*[Compiled by Brian Rounsavill from "The George Michener Hart Collection," published in the Curator's Corner, February 9, 2005 by Kurt R. Bell, Archivist at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.]*

## Half Moon Inn Sign

On March 2nd, as the focal point of AHA Friday, the Court Inn was officially rededicated, returning to its original name, the *Half-Moon Inn*. A citation from Rep. David Steil's office was read and presented by the Mayor. The new "*Half Moon Inn*" sign that now stands on Court Street was re-created by Rosemary Tottoroto and the beautiful iron work was fabricated by Ray Mathis. The Inn was originally named the *Half-Moon Inn* after it was built in 1733, and it appears as such on the *National Register of Historic Places*. However, since the County Court was situated across the street where the Gap now stands, the Inn gradually became known as the Court Inn (or, the Inn across from the Court), for which it became more commonly known.

## Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- Carriage House Collection
- David J. Witchell Salon & Spa
- DeFrehn Corporation
- First National Bank of Newtown
- Gemmi Construction, Inc.
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Mom's Bake at Home Pizza
- Newtown Hardware House
- Newtown-Jamison Physical Therapy
- Newtown Roofing Company
- One Ten South Salon
- Peruzzi Automotive Group
- Pickering Cortts & Summerson, Inc.
- ReMax Properties, Ltd.
- St. Mary Medical Center
- Stuckert & Yates
- The Law Office of Paul R. Beckert, Jr.
- The Temperance House
- Thomas-Guy Design, Ltd.
- Waitkus Design Landscape Architects
- Wells Fargo Home Mortgage
- YellowHouse Antiques

## Some New Accessions

- Korean War Jungle Helmet – *Richard Mansley*
- 1925 Newtown High School Football Team Photo – *Mike Donovan*
- Court Inn Antique Furniture Inventory – *Alan & Diana Horowitz*
- Stella Tyler Exhibition Catalogue – *Glenn & Barbara Haines*
- CDs of 1871 & 1882 Gazetteers and Map, and 1876 Bucks County Map – *Charles Lauble*
- Misc. Bills of Sale and Ephemera related to Horace G. Conrad – *James & Dori McCrane*
- Collection of 91 Items Relating to the Chambers Family – *Susan Rose*
- Interior Photo of Musser's Pharmacy (2-4 S. State) – *Mary Crane*
- Items from Goodnoe's Restaurant – *Paul & Laurie Gouza*
- Items Relating to Productions at Newtown Hall – *John Rasiej*
- Piece of the Sunset Oak – *Ken Mammel*
- Flag and Materials Related to the Presentation of Army-Navy "E" Award and Newtown's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – *Sidney Yates*
- Framed Portrait of Morris Savidge, 1931 Registry of Banks in Newtown, William Stuckert's World War II Defense Stamp Album – *Don Marshall*
- 1876 Map of Newtown from Combination Atlas – *Ken Mammel*
- Cocoonery Site Photos – *Maria & Brian Rounsavill*
- Rotary Club Paperweight Commemorating the Newtown Commons – *Paul & Lydia Lewis*
- Lighthouse Hill Cemetery Files – *David & Mary Callahan*
- 1938 Aerial Photo of Newtown – *Charles Lauble*
- 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Newtown Booklets and Tercentenary Celebration of the Birth of William Penn – *Glenn & Barbara Haines*
- Schofield Ford Bridge Committee Embossing Press & Stamp – *Marge Torongo*

- Photos of the Woods on Cunningham's Nursery Property, 1938 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Photo and Items Related to Newtown's World War II Veterans – *Mike Donovan*
- Flood of 1955 Photo, Portraits of Thomas Buckman and Sarah Linton Smith, Abstracts of Bucks County Wills 1685-1785, Frost-Watson Lumber Company Demolition Photos – *David & Mary Callahan*
- Items Related to the Newtown Railroad and Many Books and Periodicals on Transportation and Railway History – *Richard Mansley*

## St. Mark's AME Church

We have been asked to highlight *Restore, Repair, and Renew* that supports the St. Mark's A.M.E. Zion Church, located at 136 N. Congress Street. The church has been a part of the Newtown community for over 185 years and is now in need of significant restoration. Call (215) 579-9295 for more information.

## Upcoming Events

- **Annual Meeting**, "*History of the Antique Furniture of the Half Moon Inn (Court Inn)*," April 16. 8:00 p.m.
- **Cocktail Party**, April 21. 5:00 p.m.
- **Historic Walking Tour & Edward Hicks Flower Show**, May 4. 6:30 p.m.
- **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Historic Walking Tour**, June 6. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Annual Picnic**, June 23, 6:00 p.m.
- **Newtown: Past & Present**, July 17. 1:00 p.m. & *Pennswood Village*.
- **Market Day**, September 15.
- **General Membership Meeting**, "*Civilians in the Civil War*," October 15. 8:00 p.m.
- **General Membership Meeting**, "*Divining Old Houses*," November 19. 8:00 p.m.
- **Open House Tour**, December 1.

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