



**NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. BOX 303 - CENTRE AVENUE & COURT STREET - NEWTOWN, PA 18940

NEWSLETTER  
August, 1988

IMPORTANT

Annual dues are due. Please remit to Eleanor Janney, Treasurer at the above address.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE - Saturday, December 3rd.

President Francella Smith has made the following appointments:

General Chairman	Eleanor Janney
Co-Chairman	Francella Smith
Home Selection	David Callahan, Joanne Nardo
Brochure	Mary Jane Crumlish
Publicity	Mary J. Rounsaville
Cellar Kitchen	Richard Walton
Drawings	Louise Hurst
Parking Lot Tickets	Vincent Nardo, Joseph Malloy
Finance	Helen MacCorkle
Transportation	William R. Platt

Court Inn Activities:

Decorations	Arlene Waddell
Ways and Means	Margaret Danese
Ticket Sales	Donna Rayburn
Hosts and Hostesses	Cynthia and William Duncan
Hospitality	Henrietta Gehshan, Eleanor Campbell

Volunteers are needed—please phone Fran Smith at 968-3519

MARKET DAY - Saturday, September 17th

Mary Rounsaville's report is on page 2.

WALKING TOUR

Mary Jane Crumlish's report of this May 22nd event is on page 3

FEATURE ARTICLE

Helen Randle's HISTORY of the Association is attached hereto.

PAVEMENT and CURBING

A meeting of property owners will be held. Work will start soon.

LIBRARY REQUEST

Librarian Frances Cronin reports that response to her request for copies of "The Magazine Antiques" was very gratifying. Send more.

## Tenth Annual Market Day

The date, September 17th is coming up - our Tenth Annual MARKET DAY. This is our second largest money-maker of the year and we need you to volunteer your services if you are not already participating. The committee chairmen are listed below so if you have a preference for a certain event - please call them and make a contribution of your times toward this worthwhile activity:

Elizabeth Mayer, Dave Callahan and Lorraine Pentz are in charge this year.

Some of the sub-chairmen and committees are listed below:

Hay Rides	John Hilferty
Corn Husking	Bruce Stevens
Raffle (Weekend in Williamsburg)	Roberta Taylor
Stocks	Bert & Harold Lewis and Corinne and Joe Binkley
Music	Ernie Millard
Margaret Thornton's Tea Room	Lois Malloy
Peaches & Cream	Sue & Mike Hutchinson
Children's Games	June Hilbert and the Women's Forum
Membership & Information	George & Alice Bennett
Ways and Means	Margaret Danese
Ticket sales for food	Pat Carleton
Food Committee	Dick Beach, Tom Mayer, Dick Walton
Hostesses	Barbara Reeder
Set Up	Dave Callahan
Clean Up	Bill Platt
Publicity	Mary Rounsavill
	Helen Randle (Magazines)
Entertainment	Dave Callahan
Finances	Eleanor Janney

We are going to have horse and wagon rides this year which should be a drawing event for people along with an extensive list of craftsmen:

Quilting, Stenciling-floorcloths, Basketmaking  
Schernschnitte, Bone carving & Scrimshaw  
Spinning & carding wool, Tole painting  
Stoneware pottery, Woodworking, Oil painting  
Porcelain and clothespin and applehead dolls  
Windsor chairs, chair caning, children's furniture  
Cut and pierced lampshades, Wheat weaving  
Victorian hats and nosegays, satchets, pot pourri  
Duck decoy carving, wood carving, bandboxes  
Blacksmithing, power craft, metal casting  
and MANY, MANY MORE

So please make an effort and lend your support - Saturday, September 17th.  
Raindate is September 18th.

Mary J. Rounsavill  
Publicity

## "150 Years as a Borough--A Newtown Walking Tour"

On Sunday, May 22, 1988, The Newtown Historic Association commemorated the sesquicentennial of The Borough of Newtown with "150 Years as a Borough -- A Newtown Walking Tour." Despite the thunder, lightning, and rain, 82 people walked to the sites important in the incorporation of the Borough to learn about history and life in the Newtown of 1838.

Walking guides described the 1838 Newtown as they escorted the groups to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Newtown Borough Council Chambers, the Newtown Common, Phineas Jenks House, Stonehurst, and the Newtown Library. These walking guides pointed out sites that were significant in the 1838 Newtown. The walking tour guides were Tom Byrne, Ed Cunfer, Sara Jane Dallas, Cathy Fink, and Joanne Nardo.

As the group arrived at each of the above, the on-site guide explained its role in the incorporation of the Borough. The on-site guides were: St. Luke's--Chris Armstrong; Newtown Borough Council Chambers--Mayor Harold A. "Bud" Smith; Newtown Common--Dick Walton; Phineas Jenks House--Dave Callahan; Stonehurst--Barbara Hains; The Newtown Library Company--Frances Cronin. At Court Inn were Betty Benedict, DIAnn Byrne, Roger and Peggy Cooke to describe the rooms and the NHA.

Ticket sales were under the direction of Dolly Gish who was assisted by Helen Randle and Mary Rounsavill. Eleanor Janney doubled as treasurer and chief of refreshments; serving and/or donating refreshments were Alva Cornell, Margaret Danese, Bert Lewis, and Helen MacCorkle.

Special thanks goes to Francella Smith who was the whip behind the scenes and did anything and everything that was asked of her and even more.

Many helped with the promotion; these include:

- Mayor Harold A. "Bud" Smith proclaimed Sunday, May 22 as Newtown Sesquicentennial Day, thanked the NHA for commemorating this auspicious occasion with a walking tour and presented that proclamation to the NHA at the May Borough Council meeting.
- Louise Collins featured the walking tour on her program, "The Louise Collins Show," on WBUX 1570 AM on Wednesday, May 18.
- The Newtown Business and Professional Association highlighted the walking tour with their sidewalk sale promotions.
- Sparkles-Wearable Art displayed a 1800's dress and accessories in their window with a now-and-then theme.
- MaryAlice Hagan picked out the outfit from the NHA collection.
- The following State Street sites displayed maroon matted views of the State Street of yesteryears. These views were part of the promotion and were also part of the guide's spiels. These were: Colonial 5 & 10; Countryside Stitchery; First National Bank and Trust Co. of Newtown; Hoover's Newtown Pharmacy; Newtown Borough Council Chambers; Newtown Hardware House; Newtown Pro Shop; Stuckert & Yates; and The Temperance House.

"150 Years as a Borough: A Newtown Walking Tour" was about 0.75 miles, took approximately 55 minutes, and was the second in the series. Small groups left every half hour from 2 pm to 3:30 pm. The cost of the tour was \$2.50 per person including refreshments; the

birthday cake was cut early so all could enjoy it. The walking tours are the Newtown Historic Association's participation in Bucks Fever and are in lieu of the May meeting. Last year's tour, "Edward Hicks in Newtown: A Walking Tour" was part of the very successful Hicks weekend. The success of the 1988 tour is due to the many people who worked on this event: THANK YOU to all of those for a job well done!

Many walkers raved about these walking tours. One of the most frequent comments was: "What are you going to do next year?" if you are interested in being involved, please volunteer!

MaryJane Crumlish, Chairman

The Borough of Newtown  
23 North State Street  
Newtown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

# Proclamation:

WHEREAS, Newtown was incorporated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Legislature as a borough on April 16, 1838; and

WHEREAS, the qualified voters residing in the proposed Borough boundaries were notified to meet at the public house of Oliver Cadwallader on Thursday, the 17th of May, between the hours of two and six o'clock in the afternoon to vote by ballot for the acceptance or rejection of the act of Incorporation of said borough; and

WHEREAS, the qualified voters accepted that act of Incorporation and were notified to meet at the public house of Oliver Cadwallader on Monday, the 21st of May, between the hours of one and six o'clock in the afternoon to elect by ballot, one person for Chief Burgess, one person for Assistant Burgess, nine persons to compose a Town Council, five of whom were to be free holders; and

WHEREAS, the evening of the 21st of May in 1838, the newly elected officials met for the inaugural council session of the Borough of Newtown.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Harold A. "Bud" Smith, the Mayor of the Borough of Newtown, do hereby proclaim Sunday, May 22nd, 1988, NEWTOWN SESQUICENTENNIAL DAY in the Borough of Newtown. In so doing, I urge all the citizens of Newtown to join with me to honor and to thank all those Burgesses, Mayors, and Town Council Members who dedicated their time and service for the Borough of Newtown in the past 150 years. FURTHERMORE, I thank the Newtown Historic Association for commemorating this auspicious occasion with "150 YEARS AS A BOROUGH — A NEWTOWN WALKING TOUR" so that we can be reminded of the progress of the Borough of Newtown under those aforementioned elected officials from 1838 to 1988.



MAYOR

ATTEST

Secretary

## A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

### Part II - 1973 through 1987

By Helen F. Randle

Although it would be difficult to find events to equal in importance the founding of the Association and the gift of the Court Inn, the next years did bring some memorable accomplishments.

Highlights of this period include the acquisition of the Rempfer house, and of the Hicks Swinging Tavern Sign; the receipt of several grants; and the placement of the Inn on the National Register of Historic Places (as the Half-Moon Inn.)

Plans were underfoot in 1974 to acquire the Rempfer house, south of and attached to the Association's headquarters. Mrs. Rempfer agreed to the purchase, with life rights reserved for her, and she took an immediate interest in the plans for restoration. It was believed to be part of the Thornton Inn and in 1975 research was begun to substantiate this. The following year a restoration plan was set up. The well-known historic architect John Milnor was consulted, and Thomas Mayer researched and supervised the project. Thiokol Corp. provided a grant toward the restoration of \$10,000. Outside restoration was begun in 1977. In 1978 Thiokol provided a second \$10,000 grant. In 1981, when it became necessary for Mrs. Rempfer to enter a nursing home, inside restoration proceeded, with get-togethers such as a "Take Down Walls" party, a "Scrape Paper Off the Walls" and a painting party. Slides of the restoration work were taken as it progressed. A grant from the Scholler Corp. in 1979 and a \$3000 matching grant from The Grundy Foundation supplemented the funding. It now houses offices, a library, a document room, the Hicks sign room, and a meeting room.

Second only to the acquisition of the second half of the Court Inn was the purchase, in 1986, of an original Edwards Hicks Swinging Tavern Sign from the Delaware County Historical Society. This was celebrated with a reception, and the debt incurred was greatly reduced with a generous kick-off contribution by the First National Bank of Newtown of \$10,000, appeals to the members, a gourmet dinner at The Temperance House followed by a benefit concert by the Now Time Singers, with Ezra Stone taking part in the program. A fund-raising breakfast netted an impressive amount of donations. The northwest second-floor room (heretofore referred to sometimes as the ballroom) was repainted and turned over to its display; the sign was cleaned by a professional conservator; proper lighting, protection from the sun and a display area were provided; and the sign now hangs where both sides, Penn's Landing at Chester and Penn's Meeting with the Indians, can be viewed.

The Association was successful in securing the approval of Newtown Township and the County of Bucks of the allocation of \$30,000 of Township Community Developments funds toward the purchase and relocating of the Durham Road Toll House; but was forced to give up the grant because the building was not acceptable for the National Register, having been moved in 1955. However, with re-application, part of the funding was retrieved when a \$9,000 grant was obtained in 1987, which was used for a new wood shingle roof on the north section. (Fortunately for the community, the Newtown Joint Historic Commission, which had been established with the encouragement of this Association, was successful in persuading the developer, Terracon, to preserve the Toll House, which is now awaiting restoration.)

Other notable events were:

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the discovery of Joseph Thornton's 1752 inventory in 1973, which is being used as a basis for acquisitions; a gift from Newtown historian and member Edward R. Barnsley of a collection of deeds and documents, together with \$1,000 cash and furnishings for the document room; the first Market Day, held in 1978, a highly successful money-raiser which has been continued each September; the inclusion, in 1984, of the Association in a grant from the William Penn Foundation, which provided a professional archivist for a Cooperative Archives Survey Project with four other museum libraries in Bucks County, which resulted in the publication of a valuable reference book, a catalog of the collections of all of these facilities; (This reference book is available in the library or can be purchased.) and the acceptance by the National Trust for Historic Preservation of the Court Inn as one of the six small house museums in the Philadelphia area chosen in 1987 for its Comprehensive Historic Assistance Program. The team was scheduled for a visit to the Court Inn for 3 days in January, 1988.

The surprising number and variety of program topics, both educational and entertaining, included:

- Court Inn restoration, furnishings, appraisal, Rempfer house plans; restoration of the Fesmire farmhouse, "Three Arches" in Fairless Hills, the Godwin building and the Peter Wentz farmstead; excavation at the Quakertown Pottery Works and the Abbott Farm, N.J.; Newtown:- Edward Hicks, the archives catalog, the Newtown Fire Association, Lavelle Aircraft, Now and Then photos and the Joint Historic Commission/Historic Architectural Review Board; Bucks County architecture, fireplaces, the David and Spruance libraries, Pennsbury, Northampton's 250th anniversary and "The Bread Box Papers".

- Also, Philadelphia cabinetmakers, Pa. redware and folk art; early American painting, open hearth cooking, Colonial inns and taverns, American pewter, Colonial and Federal music, Victorian costumes, architecture and furnishings; English country houses, the influence of European architecture; old house restoration, antique furniture conservation, analysis of paints, spinning, genealogy, heraldry. And brass, tin and copper, Sandwich glass, Wedgewood, antique music boxes, musical instruments, miniatures, post cards, deeds; "Black and Indentured Servants in the 18th Century" and "Myths, Accidents and Little Known Facts of American History."

Presidents serving during this period were: Robert Miller, 1973-74; David Mahler, 1974-75, reelected 1975-76; Robert Miller 1976-77; Claire Hennessy, 1977-78; David Callahan (starting the 2-yr. terms) 1978-80; Jo Ann Nardo, 1980-82; Ernest Millard, 1982-84; Thomas Mayer, 1984-86; and Francella Smith, 1986-88.

Significant furnishings acquired were: a Randall carriage from Bill and Edna Lang, a canopy bed (gift), a tall case 1790 clock made by Benjamin Soliday of Bucks Co., purchased at auction; and a 1740 mahogany desk bequeathed in the estate of Arrah Lee Gaul, of Philadelphia.

In 1973, a number of deeds, including one signed by William Penn, were donated by The First National Bank. A protest was lodged of the planned demolition of the John Fenton house on S. State St. in 1974 (unsuccessful) and the Longshore house on Rte. 532 was offered to the Association (not feasible). The following year the first ad book was put out at Open House, a great money-maker; the Newtown Commons Questers took over maintenance of the Court Inn garden; a protest was sent to DER of the curtailment of the Pa. Historical and Museum Commission budget; and the Borough was encouraged to increase its historic zone.

The Leedom farmhouse was accepted on the National Register in 1976.

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That year a petition was circulated to urge preservation of the farm buildings in the State-owned Tyler Park. This became an ongoing project. In 1977 the Association was notified that no buildings would be demolished. Sunday afternoon musical programs were instituted in 1978, apparently not to last long. Lucille Trench, then Bucks Co. Recorder of Deeds, presented the Association with a number of local deeds found in the Court House. Extensive maintenance work was undertaken, including exterior and interior painting, and fence repair. After the White Hall was severely damaged by fire, the Association requested Borough Council to delay demolition (successful, it is now restored and the recipient of an award).

Tom and Elizabeth Mayer completed their research and filing of the deeds in 1980. The Remy house was offered to the Association by Gigliotti and some serious consideration was given to purchase of the White Hall Hotel, but neither was considered to be a viable project. The kitchen acquired a new tin roof. 1981 brought a protest from the Association against the plans to remodel (not restore) the Court office building next to The First National Bank, which had been acquired by the latter (unsuccessful). The facade easement program was initiated. Frances Cronin was appointed (volunteer) librarian in 1982. In both '81 and '82 trips were arranged to the Philadelphia Antique Show. In 1982, a fire alarm system was installed, the library was opened on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings, and a manuscript was submitted to Antiques magazine on the growth of Newtown. (The latter has never been published although the editors still maintain that it will be used.)

(NOTE: In the course of this research, it has been discovered that the Minutes for the year 1983 and the first 4 months of 1984 are missing from the Minute Books. If anyone can throw any light on the subject, it would be appreciated. )

The first Joseph Thornton birthday cocktail party in 1984 was a great success and this event has been continued. A much-needed copy machine was purchased. Conducted Walking Tours were arranged. A decision was made in 1985 to open a separate account for Acquisitions, which could carry over from year to year. The root cellar, part of the excavation plans, was completed in 1986 and a display area set up for archeological artifacts gathered under the supervision of our own archeologist Roberta Taylor. The kitchen was entirely remodeled. A program of Awards for Restorations in the Borough and Township was initiated. Consideration was given to acquisition of additional property. Colonial Homes magazine visited Newtown and decided to devote part of their pictorial article to the Court Inn. (Roger Cook has had reprints of that insert made in durable form, which are available in the Court Inn.) A new brick sidewalk and climate control were given high priority and were being investigated in 1986 and '87. The Association took part in the Constitution Day Parade. "Peaceable Kingdom" T- and sweat-shirts became a big sale item.

In the meantime, Open House and Market Day continued and continued to grow. The Steak Fry, moved to the Court Inn and to June, was also enjoyed every year, as was the Washington's Birthday Dinner. It would take separate articles to adequately report the activities of the Restoration, Library, Archeological and Acquisitions Committees. Work on an archeological catalog progressed, and a textile catalog was made up. Alice Ford's book on Edward Hicks was adopted as a Ways & Means sale item. Acquisition policies were set up. 1988 promises to continue all of the traditional affairs, & careful maintenance of the assets we have, and to institute new and exciting programs.

This article would not be complete without a tribute to David Callahan, whose constant surveillance, willing hands and head, and cheerful and cooperative manner, have had an influence in almost every activity of the organization.