

The Half-Moon

The Newtown Historic Association, Inc. Newsletter

NHA receives PHMC Grant

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is with great excitement that we announce the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has approved a grant in the amount of \$46,450.00 for the Thornton\Hicks house renovation project. This grant approval is the initial step in stabilizing, repairing and restoring the roof and front wall of the Lauer property, located next to the Court Inn. The grant is a matching grant, therefore, this money is only the seed money for this project. It's up to NHA members, family, friends and the Newtown Community to support the endeavor. More information will be provided shortly. Also any NHA member who would like to help with additional grant writing or fundraising for the Thornton\Hicks House should contact Dave Callahan at 215-968-3914. Contributions can be made to Newtown Historic Association, P.O. Box 303, Newtown, PA 18940. Please mark check Thornton\Hicks.

President's Day Dinner

Please plan to join us on Monday, February 19, 2001 for our annual President's Day Dinner at the Temperance House. We will once again be honoring those individuals that so graciously opened their homes for our annual Open House Tour. The speaker this year is Bob Skaler, a forensic architect who will take us on a walking tour of Philadelphia in the early 1900's as depicted by his postcard collection slide show. Please plan to join us for a fun night out!

Clean-Up Day

Mark your calendar, for Saturday, February 10, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. Anyone interested in helping clean-up the Court Inn should bring their rubber gloves and help make the place shine. Please plan to join us. Refreshment will be served.

Calendar of Events

President's Day Dinner
Monday, February 19, 2001
Cocktails 6pm, Dinner 7pm
Ye Old Temperance House,
State Street Newtown

Annual Clean Up-Day
at the Court Inn, 9:00 a.m.
Saturday, February 10, 2001

General Membership Meeting
March 19, 2001, 8:00 p.m. at
the Court Inn

Annual Membership Meeting
April 16, 2001, 8:00 p.m. at the
Court Inn

Annual Cocktail Party
Spring 2001 - TBA

Newtown Walking Tour
presented by Jeff Marshall
Sunday, May 20, 2001

Annual Picnic
Saturday, June 16, 2001

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Open House Success

The 38th Annual Open House tour was a success. Over 800 hundred people came to visit 12 historic homes and buildings that were featured this year. Those included were the Stocking Works (1889), the Kerney House (c. 1985), the Joseph Schofield house (c.1834), the Court Inn (c. 1733), the Justice House (1768), the Newtown Library Company (c. 1912), the historic Old Presbyterian Church (c. 1769), The Session House (c. 1780-1800), the Daniel Dolohan House (c. 1793), the Kelsey House (c 1890), the McIntyre House (c. 1890) and the Newtown Fire Association. The weather was sunny and cold. Special thanks are extended to Ann Balderston and Lois Molloy for co-chairing the event. Thanks also to Dolly Gish for distributing the posters, Maureen Harrison for decorating the Court Inn with greens and color and Gwen Gittens and Barbara Reeder for taking pictures. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out.

Research Hours

OPEN - Tuesday

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

OPEN - Thursday

7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Welcome New Members:

New members from Newtown: Robert and Betsy King, Audrey Paris, Ralph and Barbara Posmontier and Dr. John Whitehead.

New Orientation Handbook

Five year NHA volunteer, Carrie Wetherby, recently finished developing a Volunteer Orientation Handbook. She has complied this manual over the last few years to acquaint Court Inn volunteers with the history of the Association and the Court Inn so they may respond to visitors' questions. The handbook is also a source for volunteer guidelines and general rules for volunteers, researchers and visitors to the Court Inn. Carrie is commended for a comprehensive job.

Coming Soon: *"Historic Newtown"*

Co-editors, Paul Gouza, President of the NHA, and board members Dave Callahan and Brian Rounsavill recently finished a second photo book. The new book entitled "Historic Newtown" features over 225 rare, never before seen, NHA

photos from the turn of the 20th century. Arcadia Printing of New Hampshire will be publishing the book. Delivery date is expected around Memorial day. The editors first book, "Early Newtown, a pictorial presentation of Newtown" is now out of print although limited supplies are still available at the Court Inn and the Newtown Hardware House.

Article from the Newtown Enterprise - May, 1899

Newtown Trolley Company vs. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company

Early this (Friday) morning the Newtown Electric Street Railway Company undertook to lay its track and run cars under the archway of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company north of Langhorne. About five o'clock the Italian workmen were all brought down from the vicinity of Wycombe and put to work laying ties and rails. The rails, which had been loaded Thursday afternoon, were taken down by A.W. & W.M. Watson's teams, and the ties were pushed down on the dirt car. A large crowd of trolley officials and interested citizens gathered to watch the work, many going down from Newtown, some even before they had partaken of their

morning meal.

The work was pushed with all possible haste and the officials were congratulating themselves on the bright prospect of having the connecting link completed, when at 8:00 o'clock, just before the last rails were in place, the construction train of the Pennsylvania Railroad appeared on the scene, loaded with about 100 laborers, and in charge of J.A. Jaggard of Ernest, Pa., the supervisor of this section of the road. Without any ceremony the men proceeded to cut the bolts, loosen the rails and undo all that had been accomplished by the Newtown party. Then there commenced a struggle between the two parties for the mastery, that to say the least, was very exciting. The Silsby steam fire engine had been taken down from Newtown, stationed at Longshore's creek, and hose laid to the scene of operations.

Some of the hose had been procured from Langhorne. When the Pennsylvania men commenced work, the Newtown fireman, seven or eight in number, turned a stream of water on them, but as soon as a man fell another took his place, and the fireman were soon forced to retreat with their hosecut in different places. Many of the men were completely water-soaked. The amount of hose ruined is 250 feet, which the trolley company

will pay for.

The work of destruction was started on the south side of the railroad. As soon as a few rails had been loosened and ties removed, a hook attached to a cable connected with the engine of the train was fastened to a rail, and steam power soon displaced the track, the rails being bent without much effort, apparently, on the part of the locomotive.

George R. Mitchell, who was in the way of the first rail moved in this manner, was thrown some distance and considerably injured. He narrowly escaped being crushed by the rail.

After the wreckers had removed all the ties and rails on the south side of the road from the company's property, attention was turned to the north side where similar work was done, leaving a trolley car and the dirt car, the latter having been overturned in the melee, under the archway. These were removed later by the Pennsylvania people, the dirt car being pushed over into a meadow south of the railroad.

The tearing up was accomplished in half an hour or less. During the progress thereof there was a great deal of fighting and tussling between the contested parties. The air was sulphurous with profanity. None were injured to any extent except George R. Mitchell. Constable Kirkbride, of

Langhorne, was on hand and made ten or twelve arrests, including one boss and a number of laborers for the Pennsylvania company and Superintendent Keener, of the trolley company. The prisoners were hustled off to Justice Stackhouse's office for a hearing.

We are informed that the trolley company acted under advice of their attorney, and the result of the war will be to get the differences between the two corporations into court.

The Pennsylvania Railroad laborers were Germans and Irishmen, who were prepared for their work, and the Italians were no match for them in the struggle.

Sheriff Aaron arrived on the scene after the war was over.

A photo depicting this struggle can be seen in our new photo book entitled "Historic Newtown" available this summer.

Richard Walton, past president of the NHA in the 1970's, recently passed away. Our prayers are with his family.

The Half Moon is a publication of the Newtown Historic Association, Inc., P.O. Box 303, Newtown, PA 18940 - Paul Gouza - Editor 215-968-4004.
