



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 / preservation events in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

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Newtown Historic Association

P.O. Box 303
Centre Avenue & Court Street
Newtown, PA 18940 USA
Phone: (215) 968-4004
www.newtownhistoric.org

Come Celebrate!

Join us in celebrating the 275th Anniversary of the *Half-Moon Inn*. See the website for more details in 2008.

Recognition Dinner

On Sunday, January 27th, the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner will be held beginning at 6:00 PM at the Temperance House. The Open House Tour Homeowners and Public Building Stewards will be recognized for their work in opening their homes for this year's tour. Also, a special presentation will be made to Mr. Richard Mansley for his many years of volunteer work on behalf of the Newtown Historic Association. We expect over 60 community members to attend this event and to help us celebrate the contributions that these many individuals have made toward the advancement of the Newtown Historic Association over the past year. Tickets are \$35 per person.

Colonial Tavern Night

The sixth annual Tavern Night will be held on Saturday, March 1st at the Half-Moon Inn. The Tavern Night Committee is hoping you will join us for this wonderful colonial event, which promises to have even more colonial cheer. Some will be toasting King George, while others to George Washington. The evening will feature 18th century music, dancing and games along with delicious food catered by Joseph's Garden Grille accompanied by the Tavern Night Committee. Please come and join us for an evening that will take you back to a time when our country was new and exciting. Invitations will be mailed shortly. Please RSVP by February 24th to Jeanne Haeckel at (215) 860-0921. Tickets are \$50 per person.

February Meeting

The February meeting of the Newtown Historic Association will be held on Monday, February 18th at 8 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. A presentation entitled, "*Voices of Newtown: An Oral History and Images of Early Newtown*" features six interviews from the book "*Voices of Newtown, 1983-84*" produced by the Newtown Tricentennial Committee. The subjects and interviewees include "Growing up in Newtown" by Norman Kitchen; "A Lifetime of Farming" by Herman Heston; "Talking about Business" by Charles Huber; "The Lumber Company" by Eugene Watson; "Politics" by Leon Milnor and "A Minister's Daughter" by Jean Fretz. Join us and hear guest speakers read excerpts from these stories and see related pictures of scenes from life in early Newtown. This general membership meeting is one of a series of yearlong events and programs celebrating the 275th Anniversary of the Half-Moon Inn. The public is invited, refreshments will be served.

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Patricia Curran, *Newtown*
- Linda Pine, *Newtown*



A Penny for Your Thoughts: The P.H. Morris Token

- Compiled by Brian Rounsavill -



Peter H. Morris, son of William T. and Elizabeth Hoagland Morris, was born in Plumstead Township. In his youth, he lived in Northampton and Buckingham Township and at one time was employed by the Frank Worthington clothing store in Doylestown. Morris started in business in 1892, keeping a general store in Richboro, until 1895, when he opened a clothing store in Newtown at the corner of State and Washington Avenue. In 1906, he built the store located at 25 South State Street. By 1922, he had gone into partnership with his nephews, Morris and Clarence Savidge. In 1928, he retired because of ill health and the business continued under the name, Savidge Brothers.¹

It is believed that P. H. Morris paid to have the aluminum token (pictured above) produced as an advertising gimmick to be used on the Newtown and Wrightstown Turnpike (Durham Road). There are two known token varieties from the Newtown Turnpike: one with Gate #1 and the other with Gate #3 stamped on them. It is assumed that there was a Gate #2 token issued, but collectors do not know of an example in any society/members collections.² At present, the Gate #1 and Gate #3 tokens are thought to be very rare, with only a few in the hands of collectors. It is estimated that only about 100 of these tokens were made. Aluminum only began to be used after 1893, so the tokens were probably issued around 1900-1905.

¹ Information from obituary published in the May 4, 1944 issue of the Newtown Enterprise.

² The American Vecturist Association is a club founded in 1948 that has had more than 3300 members over the years. They collect and study worldwide bus, trolley, toll bridge, turnpike and even carousel tokens and tickets. Vecturist, from the Latin meaning "Passage Money".

The Newtown and Wrightstown Turnpike (Durham) Toll House was in operation from approximately 1870 to 1920, when it was originally located at this site at the intersection of Sycamore Street (532) and Durham Road (413). The toll house served as the headquarters of the Wrightstown and Newtown Turnpike Road Company. The section of the turnpike that this gatekeeper controlled was from the intersection of the routes now known as 532 and 413 to Wrightstown-Taylorsville Road and 413.

Travelers paid at an "entrance" location and gave a token as "proof of payment" at the exit gate. When you entered and paid for a measured distance, they issued you a token for that exit gate and the token was collected there. This eliminated people sneaking on to the road at some place along the line and saying that they paid at the beginning. When the road closed in 1920, all the tokens held by the company were probably destroyed.

It is believed that Morris may have given these tokens to customers who bought a suit or a pair of shoes at his store. Similarly today, merchants or doctors often provide free parking by validating parking tickets for customers or patients.³ Currently, there are less than three of each of these tokens known to the transportation token collecting fraternity. The ones that survived were probably in the hands of people who did not use them prior to the toll-road closing. At their current level of rarity, these tokens are worth several hundred dollars each. However, as more are discovered, the value will drop. Anyone with more information about these tokens, please contact Brian Rounsavill.

³ Information provided by Larry Dziubek, Butler, PA.

The Last Will and Testament of Edward Hicks (1780-1849)



*Edward Hicks Portrait by Thomas Hicks, 1836.
Courtesy, James A Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, PA.*

I, Edward Hicks, of the borough of Newtown, Bucks County, Penna., Being considerably advanced in life... and after having enjoyed my share of happiness and as many of the blessings and comforts of this world, as most individuals (graciously meted out to me by a kind Providence) think it right to endeavor to make the family I leave behind (who are very near and dear to me) as comfortable as the nature of the case, and my little estate, will admit of... I therefore make and publish this my Last Will and Testament, annulling all other, and former wills by me at anytime made.

In the first place, I direct all my debts – funeral expenses and will charges, fully paid out of my Estate by my Executor hereinafter named...

2nd, I then give and Devise to my dearly beloved wife Sarah W. Hicks (for the purpose of keeping my dear family together) All my remaining Estate, Real, personal and mixed of every kind whatsoever, during her natural life – and upon her decease, whatsoever may remain, of said Estate, I order, and direct to be divided into three equal shares; in such manner as may be thought just and equitable, by the arbitrators hereinafter named ... One of which Shares I give and bequeath to my son Isaac W. Hicks, and to his heirs and assigns – One other of which Shares, I give and devise to my daughter Elizabeth S. Hicks and to her heirs and assigns. And the remaining Share, I give and Devise to my said son Isaac W. Hicks in Trust nevertheless, for my dear afflicted daughter Mary H. Hicks – The

interest or income of which: And such parts of the principal, as my said son Isaac shall think necessary, shall from time to time be expended, for her comfort and support, during her natural life – And upon her decease should any of the said Share, so held in Trust, remain – It is this my Will, that such remainder, shall be equally divided between all my children, Viz. Isaac W. Hicks – Susan W. Carle, Elizabeth S. Hicks & Sarah B. Parry, share and share alike.

Edward Hicks (1780-1849), son of Isaac and Catherine Hicks, was a Quaker minister, sign painter and folk artist, most famous for over sixty versions of his Peaceable Kingdom paintings. Born in Langhorne, his mother died when he was young, and Hicks was raised by David and Elizabeth Twining on their farm in Newtown Township. After an apprenticeship in Attleborough (now Langhorne) and an eleven-year stint as junior partner of a coach maker in Milford (now Hulmeville), Hicks moved to Newtown in 1811 with his wife Sarah Worstall and his children to go into business for himself. They moved into the Thornton/Hicks house on Court Street next to the Half Moon Inn. Hicks opened a shop in his back yard and carried on his business of coach and sign painting. Hicks was a central figure in establishing a Friends Meeting in Newtown. In 1821, Hicks built this stone house located at 122 Penn Street. He built his coach shop in the back yard and his paint shop above the carriage house, which adjoined his home. Edward Hicks resided in Newtown until his death in 1849. He is buried in the Friends Meeting burial ground; his memorial service on the grounds drew 5,000 people and was reportedly the largest funeral in Bucks County at that time.

Open House Tour

The 45th Annual Holiday Open House Tour was held on Saturday, December 1st from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Over 900 people enjoyed the beautiful weather to tour the following private homes and public buildings that were open for touring:

- Hager House (237 S. Chancellor)
- Saggese/Meeks House (139 N. Lincoln)
- Moss/Coane House (319 E. Washington)
- Hagan House (203 E. Washington)
- Markey/Greene House (15 Liberty)
- Mathis/Tottoroto House (114 Liberty)
- Hendricks House (17 Jefferson)
- Szwajkos Train Display (107 Penn)
- Newtown Friends Home
- Newtown Methodist Church
- Newtown Borough Hall
- The Half-Moon Inn

The weather was ideal for strolling the streets of Newtown to visit the sites on this year's tour. The Half-Moon Inn was beautifully appointed by the Countryside Gardeners and had an open hearth cooking demonstration, re-enactors portraying original proprietors Joseph and Margaret Thornton, and music was provided by the "Out of Tuners". The homeowners and volunteers did a wonderful job decorating their homes and hosting the visitors. The Open House Tour Committee wishes to thank everyone who helped make the day a great success.

Clean-Up Day

The annual Half-Moon Inn Clean-up Day will be held on Saturday, March 29th. Volunteers are needed to help restore some luster to the many historical items and furnishings in the Half-Moon Inn. No experience is necessary! Join us at 8:30 AM. Roll up your sleeves and give us a helping hand if you can spare the time.

Spring Cocktail Party

The NHA will be holding its spring cocktail party on April 19th from 5-8 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. Take this opportunity to catch up with acquaintances, old and new. Tickets are \$35 per person. Invitations will be mailed in the spring. Join us for this wonderful event. For more information, contact Mary Callahan at (215) 968-3914 or dcnhh@comast.net.

Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- David J. Witchell Salon & Spa
- DeFrehn Corporation
- Dragonfly, Ltd.
- 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 Corts & Summerson, Inc.
- ReMax Properties, Ltd.
- St. Mary Medical Center
- Stuckert & Yates
- The Law Office of Paul R. Beckert, Jr.
- The Temperance House
- The Township House
- Thomas-Guy Design, Ltd.
- Tyrol Agency, Inc.
- Wells Fargo Home Mortgage
- YellowHouse Antiques

Some New Acquisitions

- "Newtown Enterprise, Established 1868" Sign – *Pete Chesner*
- "W.E. Randall Photos and Framing" Sign – *George Ermentrout*
- Worth Family Letters – *Ruth Barnsley*
- World War I Items, including 2 Uniforms, Army saddle, helmet, duffle bag – *Walter Eckert*

- Deed for Property at 148 N. State St. – *Robert & Peggy Anderson*
- Items Relating to Newtown and the Savidge Family – *Sarah Jane Dallas*
- "Barns of Bucks County" Book – *Jeff & Becky Marshall*
- "Fresh Vegetables, Oysters, Fresh Fish" Sign (from store at 104 S. State) – *Vincent & Judy Stefani*
- Envelope for Paragon Seed & Plant Company, Newtown, PA – *Harold Stetson*
- Collection of Receipts for Auto Service from Richard Olson's Auto Shop – *Larry & Chris Bethman*
- "H. Stanford Roberts, Nursery, Inc." Book – *Paul & Laurie Gouza*
- Act of Incorporation and Ordinances of the Borough of Newtown, May 1843 – *Sidney Yates*
- "Now Available Here! Goodnoe Farm Ice Cream. Bucks County's Best" Sign – *Skip Goodnoe*
- "As You Were, Memoirs of World War II" Book – *William Craighead*

Upcoming Events

- **Volunteer Recognition Dinner**, January 27, 6:00 p.m. @ the Temp
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Voices of Newtown: An Oral History and Images of Early Newtown," February 18. 8:00 p.m.
- **Tavern Night**, March 1. 7:00 p.m.
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Newtown Film from 1976," March 17. 8:00 p.m.
- **Clean-Up**, March 29. 8:30 a.m.
- **Cocktail Party**, April 19. 5:00 p.m.
- **Annual Meeting**, April 21. 8:00 p.m.
- **5th Grade Historic Walking Tour**, June 4. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Historic Walking Tour & Flower Show**, June 6. 6:30 p.m.
- **Annual Picnic**, June 21, 5:00 p.m.
- **Market Day**, September 13.

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