



# 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

Brian Rounsavill, *President*  
David Callahan, *First Vice President*  
Jeff Marshall, *Second Vice President*  
Michael DiFiori, *Recording Secretary*  
Mary Callahan, *Corresp. Secretary*  
Marge Torongo, *Treasurer*

## Board of Directors

Harriet Beckert  
Paul Gouza  
Jeanne Haeckel  
Bronwyn Jones  
William Mahler  
Joanne Nardo  
Geno Peruzzi  
Susan Thompson  
David Walton  
David Mahler - *Parliamentarian*

## Newtown Historic Association

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

## Research Center Hours

Tuesdays 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Thursday 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
And also by appointment  
Admission is free

## New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- George & Barbara Ermentrout, *Newtown, PA*
- Kathleen Gill, *Newtown, PA*
- Michael Kaplan, *Newtown, PA*
- Laura Menditto, *Newtown, PA*
- Thomas & Barbara Richardson, *Newtown, PA*
- Robert & Nicole Rodowitz, *Newtown, PA*
- Madeline Ziesel, *Newtown, PA*

## January Dinner Meeting

The January Volunteer Recognition Dinner meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>** at 6:00 PM at the Temperance House, 5 S. State St., Newtown. Homeowners who had their houses open for the Open House Tour and Stewards of the Public Buildings that were open and also a Volunteer from our Research Center will all be honored. Contact Jo-Anne Nardo, 215-968-0952 for reservations – the cost is \$35.00 per person.

## Clean Up Day at the Half Moon Inn

Clean-Up Day will be held this year on **Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>** at 8:30 AM at the Half Moon Inn. 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 and roll up your sleeves and give us a helping hand. Come out and help – it is a great time to meet people and make new friends.

## February Meeting - "African Americans in the Civil War"

The February meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 8 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. **Note that this meeting is on a Tuesday evening instead of a Monday.** In celebration of Black History Month, the NHA has invited Paula Gidjunis, an instructor at the Manor College Civil War Institute, to present a lecture entitled "*African Americans in the Civil War*". The presentation will discuss the different roles African Americans, both free and slave, took on in aiding in the abolition of slavery. The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

## Colonial Tavern Night

The ninth annual Tavern Night will be held on **Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>** at the Half-Moon Inn. Join us for this wonderful colonial event, which promises to have even more colonial cheer. The evening will feature 18th century music, dancing, along with delicious food catered by Joseph's Garden Grille accompanied by colonial side dishes. Join us for an evening that will take you back to a time when our country was new and exciting. RSVP by March 4th to Jeanne Haeckel at (215) 327-7958. Tickets are \$50 per person.



## The Newtown Friends Boarding Home

In 1895 at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends the following minute was adopted: "In connection with the answer to the Sixth Query, there was presented by a valued Friend, Mary M. Thomas, a concern relative to a Home for aged and infirm Friends of limited means. That these should be provided for where the little they may have will secure in their declining years greater care and more comfort than such can individually procure for themselves".

A committee was named to consider the matter and to report at the next Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Eight Friends from the Bucks Quarterly Meeting were on this committee. These Friends were Isaac Eyre, Mark P. Rich, Watson Kenderdine, Oliver H. Holcomb, M. Ellen Longshore, Harriet L. Worthington, Sarah Ann Wildman and Cynthia S. Holcomb.

In 1896 the committee reported, in their judgment, such Homes were needed and they recommended the establishment of the same, advising "they should be located near a meeting." Following this report, was this communication from Joseph T. Jeans "To the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends held at Race and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets, the sum of \$200,000 is donated from the estate of Joseph Jeanes to assist in the establishment and maintenance of Boarding Homes for the Aged and Infirm amongst Friends and those in sympathy with us".

At the Bucks Quarterly Meeting following the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1896, a committee was named to ascertain if a Home was needed for the Friends belonging to the Bucks Quarterly Meeting. Four members were named from each Monthly Meeting to make a canvass. The committee was as follows: David Palmer, Charles Satterthwaite, Merciana Merrick, Hannah Altemus, Amos Satterthwaite, George C. Atkinson, Samuel Hart, Anna C. Atkinson, Elizabeth Cadwallader, Hannah Kenderdine, Agnes S. Ely, William M. Ely, Stephen Betts, John M. Stapler, Algernon Cadwallader, Rebecca F. Johnson, Elizabeth Laing, Walter Laing, Samuel Swain, Agnes S. Palmer, Elizabeth D. Taylor, Jane D. Vail, Horace T. Smith, Ezra Michener, Ema D. Eyre, Letitia W. Twining, Abram R. Vail and Josiah Wilson.

The Fourth Bucks Quarterly Meeting in 1896 at Wrightstown, the following Monthly Meetings contributed toward the maintenance of a Home: Falls Monthly Meeting, Bristol Monthly Meeting, Middletown Monthly Meeting, Wrightstown Monthly Meeting, Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Solebury Monthly Meeting, Makefield Monthly Meeting and Quakertown Monthly Meeting. The committee rented a large brick house of Dr. Lettie A. Smith, now known as Chancellor Apartments and opened the Home there on Fifth Month 3, 1897.

They received \$788.67 from the Joseph Jeanes estate. David and Agnes S. Palmer and daughter Elizabeth were selected to have charge of the Home.

In 1898, through the representative of the Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Anna C. Atkinson and Edward M. Paxson became interested and made an offer to build a Home costing \$10,000, if the committee could raise a like sum for an endowment fund. The Bucks Quarterly Meeting raised that amount, and Judge Paxson contributed \$30,000. This gift was given in honor of his father and mother, Thomas and Ann Johnson Paxson.

A lot was purchased from Emmor K. Janney, who was willing to sell provided that the entrance might face his ancestral home on Congress Street, “and the stable and other out buildings be placed to the rear or westernly side of the lot”. The front preferred was on Centre Avenue. To satisfy all interested, a compromise provided for two entrances. Later, small pieces of ground were purchased from Myra Hibbs, Maria Twining and J. Pemberton Hutchinson; and from the heir of George Brooks, the committee purchased an orchard. Judge Paxson paid for all these additions.

On Seventh Month 6, 1899, the date stone was placed on the south wall, and the “Home Committee” walled in behind the date stone, a jar containing data relating to the Home. On Third Month 3, 1900, the Home was formally dedicated. Judge Paxson passed the papers and keys over to George C. Atkinson, president of the committee, who in well chosen words, accepted on behalf of the Bucks Quarterly Meeting. Words of appreciation were also expressed by Samuel Swain, Amos Satterthwaite and Walter Laing.

The Home is a three story, native brownstone building, with numerous dormer windows and it has accommodations for 50 guests. A bronze tablet in the reception hall bears the following inscription: “This building was erected in 1899 in memory of Thomas and Ann Johnson Paxson by their son, Edward M. Paxson”. Judge Paxson was instrumental in having a number of books given to the Home’s library by John Wanamaker, John Hayes, J. Lober Welsh and M. Stanley Quay. Theodore Roosevelt sent an autographed copy of his “Winning of the West”.

In 1912, with funds bequeathed by Anna T. Jeanes, an addition was built to the Home for an infirmary. The Home is under the care of the Bucks Quarterly Meeting, which appoints three trustees, known as the “Committee of the Friends Home”, to administer its affairs and care for an endowment fund which has been enlarged from time to time by legacies and contributions.

[Bird in Hand 4-5-1951].

*Editor’s Note: From 1938 to 1945 Edward R. Barnsley, well-known Newtown collector, historian and preservationist, published a weekly article on Newtown history in the local newspaper called the Newtown Enterprise. These articles are in the collection of manuscripts housed in the Barnsley Room of the Newtown Historic Association, and this article has been reprinted from this collection.*



## Market Day Recap

Market Day was held on Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> under sunny skies. There were over 60 artists and crafts people showing and selling their wares. We were fortunate to have our Open Hearth Cooking lady, Mercy Ingraham instructing people who passed by on how to cook colonial tasty recipes. The hayrides by “A Better Way Farms” are always a fun activity for the younger set as they traverse the streets in the historic district. We also had great food by Isaac Newton’s, Lee’s Hoagies, Rouget’s Gourmet Express, and Styer’s Orchards. The children’s crafts in the Boone Garden drew a large crowd as children made punched tin and other simple crafts. We thank all the people who helped make this another successful Market Day.

## Open House Tour

The 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Open House Tour was held on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Over 800 people enjoyed the cold and beautiful weather to tour the following private homes and public buildings that were open for touring:

- **The Hains House**  
111 S. Congress St.
- **The Newell House**  
35 S. Congress St.
- **The Disken House**  
400 E. Washington Ave.
- **The Michelin House**  
20 N. Lincoln Ave.
- **The Rodowitz House**  
135 Liberty St.
- **The Everitt House**  
109 E. Washington Ave.
- **Newtown Friends Meeting House - 219 Court St.**
- **Newtown Friends Home**  
50 S. Congress St.
- **Newtown Borough Hall**  
23 N. State St.
- **Newtown Library Company**  
114 East Centre Avenue
- **Half-Moon Inn**  
Court Street & Centre Avenue
- **The Stocking Works**  
301 South State Street

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. Also recorder music by Vicky Roza and John Pinzka. 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.

## March Meeting - "Bryn Athyn Railroad Disaster of 1921"

The March meeting will be held on **Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>** at 8:00 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. The program will be "*Bryn Athyn Railroad Disaster of 1921*" presented by the Southampton Railroad Station Society. This will prove to be an interesting presentation on the crash on the Newtown Line in Bryn Athyn where some Newtown citizens were killed and many were injured. The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Half Moon Inn. All members are invited. The Annual Business Meeting will have reports from all standing and the committee chairmen and the election of directors as follows 4 directors for a term of 3 years. Following the Annual Business Meeting, a presentation entitled, "*Treasures from the Attic: Selected Items from the NHA Archives*" will be given by Harriet Beckert and David Callahan. This lecture will showcase selected items from the NHA archives that are interesting and unique to the Newtown community.

## Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- David J. Witchell Salon & Spa
- DeFrehn Corporation
- First National Bank of Newtown
- Harold Beck & Sons, Inc.
- Holland Floor Covering
- Law office of Paul R. Beckert, Jr.
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Newtown Hardware House
- Newtown-Jamison Physical Therapy
- ReMax Properties, Ltd.
- Stuckert and Yates
- Waitkus Design Landscape Architects

## Upcoming Events

- **General Membership Meeting**, "African Americans in the Civil War" *February 22. 8:00 p.m.*
- **Tavern Night**, *March 12 . 7:00 p.m.*
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Bryn Athyn Railroad Disaster of 1921," *March 21. 8:00 p.m.*
- **Spring Clean-Up**, *March 26. 8:30 a.m.*
- **Annual Meeting**, "Treasures from the Attic", *April 18. 8:00 p.m.*
- **Cocktail Party**, *May 7. 5:00 p.m.*
- **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Historic Walking Tour**, *June 12. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.*
- **Historic Walking Tour**, *June 10. 6:30 p.m.*
- **Annual Picnic**, *June 18. 6:00 p.m.*
- **Market Day**, *September 17.*
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Stories from the Newtown Cemetery", *Sunday, October 9. 2p.m.*
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Devastation on the Delaware: the Flood of 1955" *November 14. 8p.m.*
- **Open House Tour**, *December 3.*

---

*The Half Moon* is published quarterly by the Newtown Historic Association, Inc., P.O. Box 303, Centre Avenue & Court Street, Newtown, PA 18940



Printed on Recycled Paper.

---