



**NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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

# NEWSLETTER

Winter 1992-93 Issue

President - C. David Callahan  
Editor - Helen F. Randle

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November 16    Membership Meeting -  
8:00 p.m.       Fran Waite, of Mercer  
                  Museum, will speak on  
                  Tombstones. (See p. 2.)
- December 5     Christmas in Historic  
10:00 - 5:00    Newtown - See enclosed  
                  program.
- December 7     Executive Meeting  
7:30 p.m.
- January 4       Board of Directors  
7:30 p.m.       Meeting
- January 18      Membership Meeting -  
8:00 p.m.       Slides of Open House  
                  will be shown.
- February 1      Board of Directors  
7:30 p.m.       Meeting
- February 15     Washington's Birth-  
                  day Dinner

Look for announcement of Tavern Night, an informal dinner to be served at the Court Inn in mid-March by the Gittens and Trowbridges, members and gourmet chefs.

NHA Telephone at Court Inn - 968-4004

### Officers - 1992-93:

President - David Callahan  
First V.P. - Philip Hagan  
Second V.P. - Martin Sutton  
Treasurer - Eleanor Janney  
Recording Sec. - Marjorie Torongo  
Corr. Sec. - Mary Rounsavill

## CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE TOUR- DECEMBER 5

Francella Smith, Coordinator of the 1992 tour with Maryalice Hagan, announces the following committee assignments:

- Selection of Homes: David Callahan  
Hostesses: M. J. Crumlish  
Betsy King  
Maryalice Hagan
- Ticket Sales: Eleanor Janney  
Marge Torongo
- Pre-sale of Tickets: The Giving Tree  
Rhodes Flower &  
Gift Shop
- Brochure: Francella Smith  
Maryalice Hagan
- Sketches: Louise Hurst
- Photographers: Ivins Smith  
Ernest Millard
- Map Hayden Architec-  
ture
- C. R. High School  
Parking Lot Vince Nardo
- Transportation: Skip Trowbridge
- Ad Book: Marge Torongo  
Eleanor Janney
- Publicity: Mary Rounsavill
- Court Inn Activities:
- Coordinator: Mary Rounsavill  
Decorations: Clark's Flower  
Shop
- Hospitality: H. Gehshan  
Ways & Means: Margaret Danese  
Eleanor Janney
- Finance: Eleanor Janney
- Cellar Kitchen: Susan Plaisted
- Ticket Sales: Bette Benedict

MARKET DAY PROFIT: The Treasurer, Eleanor Janney has announced that a profit of over \$9,200 was realized at this year's Market Day in September.

THE HALF-MOON INN

NOTES

In October of 1975 a few of our members were doing research on the Thornton family at the Spruance Library of the Bucks County Historical Society, when I came upon the following advertisement, in Volume 7 of The Pennsylvania Gazette:

"March 10, 1746-7  
TO BE SOLD by Joseph Thornton, in Newtown, Bucks,  
The Half-Moon Inn, which he now keeps, and hath done about 14 years; it is a convenient house for a tavern or store, having 4 rooms on a floor, with fireplaces in each, and two ditto above stairs; also 4 good cellars, one of which is a kitchen, with an oven and sink in it, and room for a copper to be hung (the flews already made) that adjoining to it has a fire-place; they are all well wall'd and pointed, and have inward and outward doors to each It is the nearest to the courthouse, and the court is pleased to dine at it."

In the same volume it is also referred to as "Joseph Thornton's Inn" and, on June 26, 1755, it was referred to as the "Half-Moon tavern."

This is now known as "The Court Inn" and is the headquarters of the Newtown Historic Association, Inc.

H. Randle

Schofield Bridge Painting Raffle:  
On Open House Day (Christmas in Historic Newtown), December 5, the Schofield Bridge Committee will be displaying, at the Court Inn, the watercolor of the former bridge, painted by renowned Bucks County artist Ranulph Bye, for which chances will be sold. Limited editions of a print made from the painting will be available. The drawing for the original painting will be held at Open House in December of 1993.

Gifts to the NHA Library:

Appreciation is extended for the following donations:

Genealogical material on the Boone family - Mrs. Edward Curdts

Genealogical material on Tomlinson and Roberts families - Mrs. Edward Curdts

Historic material on the Newtown Reliance Company for the Apprehension of Horse Thieves and Other Villains - Richard Hoover

November Program Information (received just prior to publication):  
Mrs. Waite will present a slide lecture on numerous religious and other cemeteries throughout Bucks County. She has assisted in transcribing many tombstones for the Mercer Museum and is a professional genealogist.

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THE TOLL HOUSE - AN EXAMPLE OF THE TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS AND REWARDS OF SAVING  
A HISTORIC LANDMARK

When Raymond Goodnoe (Skip's father) embarked on building the Dairy Bar in 1955 at the intersection of then Rtes. 413 and 532, he arranged to have the Toll House moved to its present location on land owned by him. This land was subsequently sold to Terracon, whose plan was to establish a shopping center on a tract which included the Toll House site.

Terracon's first plan, presented in the early 1980's, indicated the intent to demolish the Toll House. This alarmed a number of people. After exploring a number of possibilities, this Association applied for and was granted Newtown Township Community Development funds to move the building back onto Sycamore

St. (Rte. 532). However, receipt of the funding was contingent on the building being eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, it was eventually judged by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Research not eligible by virtue of its having been moved from its original location. As a result of this decision, the Historic Association reluctantly gave up the grant in September of 1986.

Not knowing what the next move might be or when it might occur, the Historic Association and the Joint Historic Commission\*, as well as several individuals, continued to seek ways to preserve the house. A year passed, and nothing was resolved.

In August of 1987, the need for action became imminent when the Historic Commission received notice that an application to demolish the building had been submitted to the Township. The Commission immediately took action and requested a meeting with Terracon officials. It also released publicity, which contained historical information on the Toll House and negative reaction to the decision to demolish the structure. Consequently, the requested meeting was held, in December, and turned out to be very productive, as William Meritz of Terracon, after being briefed by the Commission, began to take an interest in preserving the building as a focal landmark to his shopping center.

The Board of Supervisors of Newtown Township cooperated when it went along with some minor changes to the final plan for the development, to make it possible to retain the Toll House on its present site. From this time on, positive action proceeded swiftly, with members of the Commission, a representative of this Association and staff of Terracon meeting several times to discuss the restoration. An encouraging development was the individual interest and enthusiasm for the project expressed by the Terracon team of skilled workers who were assigned to the project. Terracon further cooperated by agreeing to pay all expenses of the restoration. The Commission continued through 1988 in a consulting capacity to the construction team.

On May 17, 1989, the Dedication of the restored Toll House took place. Thus, after several years of sometimes discouraging, followed by increasingly encouraging developments, all of the efforts were rewarded with the preservation and restoration of this unique reminder of life in Newtown a century ago, one more on the list of historic properties in the Newtown area which have been saved and/or restored.

One more dimension has been added with another civic-minded group, the Penn's New Towne Questers, furnishing the building. The Toll House is #12 on the Christmas in Historic Newtown tour.

\*The Newtown Joint Historic Commission (often confused with this Historic Association) consists of eight members, four appointed by the Borough and four by the Township, which, among other functions, is charged with "identifying and preserving historical sites."

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We hope that you will bear with us in our effort to give a name to and improve the format of this newsletter. We have enlisted the advice of Roger Cook, former Board member of this Association and a graphic designer of world-wide fame. It was not easy to set up a meeting with a man as busy as he, but we are fortunate to be able to profit by his expertise.

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