



NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

---

AN ENTERPRISE

OF THE NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

AND SPRUANCE LIBRARY

By Richard N. Mansley.

The single, best source of historical information about Newtown is contained in the pages of the Newtown Enterprise newspapers. And the single, best collection of these newspapers is owned by the Spruance Library of the Bucks County Historical Society. They have every year from its beginning in 1868 until that newspaper ceased to exist in 1965 with the exception of 1931 and a few issues of various dates.

My experience with these newspapers began in 1967, and continued off and on during the ensuing years. As they formed the basic source for my research, I felt an obligation and responsibility for their preservation. It became evident over the years that the newspapers were suffering from use and abuse and were deteriorating rapidly, especially those issues printed on the poorer grades of paper which would tear merely by turning the pages in the bound volumes.

As a member of both the Newtown Historic Association and the Bucks County Historical Society, I approached David Callahan, President of the former organization, with the idea of a joint effort to have the entire collection of the papers microfilmed, with one set of microfilms for each organization. The Spruance Library agreed to the project as they felt some of the papers might not last more than five years under existing conditions. After some delay a favorable estimate was obtained from Alpha Systems - microfilmers - of Huntingdon Valley, PA. It was still more than we were prepared to pay, but one item stood out in the estimate - document preparation.

Document preparation consists of checking each volume of newspapers to be sure all issues are there and bound in correct chronological sequence. At the same time all rips and tears have to be mended with archival tape. Any missing or badly damaged issues have to be noted with a flag inserted in the volume plus a record kept on a separate piece of paper for easier reference.

Rather than pay Alpha Systems for doing this routine work, it was decided to have volunteers of Spruance Library and the Newtown Historic Association provide the labor and possibly reduce the costs.

Four members of the library committee of the Newtown Historic Association became involved in the enterprise - Marion Dahlman, "Dottie" Soden, "Mike" Donovan, and Richard Mansley.

President Callahan made numerous trips to Doylestown to obtain the bound volumes of newspapers and keep us supplied with work. Soon the rooms of the Historic Association were filled with volumes and volumes of the Enterprise.

Beginning in August of 1996, each Tuesday we diligently labored over the preparation of each volume of newspapers. The air conditioning of the building made a pleasant atmosphere in which to work during the hot summer months. Otherwise, we would have all thrown up our hands at the enormous amount of work with which we were faced. Some volumes were in good condition and the work proceeded rapidly. Other volumes were in sad condition and required mending of almost every page. Although we could not help commenting on some of the news and advertisements we saw, no reading was possible, or we would never have completed the job. Being retired, and with time on my hands, I spent some additional days working in the quiet, pleasant surroundings of the reading room.

Finally, the last piece of archival tape was applied to damaged pages, the last volume was examined, and our work was completed. Now all we had to do was wait for Alpha Systems to arrive with their truck and pick up the volumes of papers.

It was sometime in September or October when all the newspapers finally left the premises, and the long wait for the arrival of the microfilms began. It was hoped the microfilms would arrive shortly after Thanksgiving, but the old year ended and the new year began before the microfilms were finished. The vendor's bills were paid, the microfilms delivered, and the Newtown Historic Association is now the proud owner of an almost complete set of the Newtown Enterprise newspapers.

---

NOTE: Mr. Mansley is an extremely capable, but quiet modest man. He has lived in Philadelphia all of his life and makes the trip to Newtown faithfully every Tuesday by bus, no matter what the weather. He worked for 38 years as a mechanical draftsman and this training may have given him the aptitude for the exacting and thorough work he has performed on the Newtown Enterprise and in the Barnsley Library, or it may be a natural characteristic. Mr. Mansley neglected to mention in the above article that he donated \$10,000 to have the Enterprises microfilmed for posterity. The Association and the community are deeply indebted to him for his gift and for his "labor of love."

Helen F. Randle

#### NEEDED

A volunteer to serve as Costume Mistress to see that costumes are properly stored on hangers in the large closets on the north side of the attic; and to devise a system of numbering and identifying the costumes and of having them checked out when borrowed and checked in when returned. (Note: These costumes have been provided by various ex-members, members and friends for use on Market Day, Open House Day and other occasions. They are to be taken out on a loan basis. PLEASE RETURN ANY COSTUMES YOU HAVE "BORROWED" AND NOT RETURNED. The writer donated five costumes, three of which were made by members of her family; and as of the date of this writing, one is in the closets.)

34TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS  
OPEN HOUSE TOUR  
"CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY"

Saturday, December 7th was a rainy, nasty day, but almost five hundred stalwart souls braved the elements to attend our tour. Bus transportation was provided to all the houses and included in the price of a ticket. We were fortunate to have so many wonderful "country" homes this year. Included on the tour were: Temora Farm, Mr. & Mrs. Craig A. Smith; William Smith House, Robert Black and Robert Thomas; Albert J. Thompson House, Mr. & Mrs. Glen Vasquez; General John Lacey House, Mr. Jeff Price; Cider Press Farm, Mr. & Mrs. Louis Skerdlant; The Octagonal School House; Historic Presbyterian Church and the Session House; The Stocking Works; and the Court Inn.

Many thanks to all our committee chairmen and volunteers who worked so diligently, despite the weather, to make the tour as successful as possible.

Joanne Nardo  
Chairman

OFFICERS

President	David Callahan
First Vice President	Lorraine Pentz
Second Vice President	Martin Sutton
Treasurer	Eleanor Janney
Recording Secretary	Ann Linkenheimer
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Callahan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Douglas Gittens	Jeanette Rogers
Mary Kester	Francella Smith
Jane Rae Millard	Michael Swanda
Lois Molloy	Marjorie Torongo
Joanne Nardo	Elizabeth Gish - (Honorary Director)

EDITORS

Lorraine Pentz	Helen Randle
----------------	--------------

CALENDAR

February 3, 1997, 7:30 P.M.	Executive Meeting
February 16, 1997, 10:30 A.M.	"CLEAN-UP DAY" Come in your work clothes prepared to assist in housecleaning the Court Inn. There are a number of areas which do not get attention in the regular commercial cleaning, such as kitchen cupboards, fireplaces, curtains, candlesticks, etc. (Three or four hours, followed by an informal party.)
February 17, 1997	PRESIDENT'S DAY DINNER (see red flyer mailed to members) CASH BAR - 6:00 P.M. DINNER - 7:00 P.M. \$25.00 GUEST SPEAKER - Jerome Ryan SUBJECT - "Independence Hall and the American Revolution"
March 3, 1997, 7:30 P.M.	Board Meeting
March 17, 1997, 8:00 P.M.	Membership Meeting Guest Speaker*
April 7, 1997, 7:30 P.M.	Board Meeting
April 21, 1997, 8:00 P.M.	Annual Membership Meeting Election of Officers President's Message Reports by Officers, Board and Committee Chairmen

\*As we "go to press", we have received from Martin Sutton, our long-standing faithful program chairman, information on the guest speaker for the March meeting:- Brian Heverin, Chief of Construction, Philadelphia branch of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, will give a slide presentation on "The Gruber Wagon Works, Where Time Stood Still", which is located near Reading, PA.