

# The Half-Moon

The Newtown Historic Association, Inc. Newsletter

## “Thornton/Hicks House proposal gets board approval”

The first step in the restoration of the Thornton/Hicks House at 107 Court Street was approved by the NHA Board of Directors at their March meeting. The architectural and planning services proposal submitted by John Milner Architects of Chadds Ford, Pa was unanimously approved and will provide for the integration of the building into the Court Inn complex. The proposal was broken down into four main phases. Repair and restoration of the roof and west attic wall of the Thornton/Hicks House. Preparation of a conceptual plan for the integration of the Thornton/Hicks House into the overall Court Inn property.

Preparation of a Historic structure report for the Thornton/Hicks House and preparation of designs, working drawings and specifications for restoration of the Thornton/Hicks House the document center/library and any future out buildings. The Historic Structure Report will be prepared by a student enrolled in the graduate program in Historic Preservation of the University of Pennsylvania. This student will commit a maximum of 240 hours to the project, commencing in June and ending in August 2000. The report will include a physical investigation of the building to determine its original appearance and the nature and extent of modifications over time. The majority of costs associated with this work will be paid by the Pennsylvania Community Development Grant received last year. The House was purchased from Miss Grace Lauer in 1998. From our research we know that the Thornton/Hicks House was

initially constructed in 1782 by Margaret Thornton as a 2 ½ story stone residence with a brick front facing Court Street. After her death in 1790 the property was purchased by Abraham Chapman, prominent attorney at that time and then sold to the artist Edward Hicks in 1811 where he lived until 1821 when he moved to the stone house on Penn Street. It is likely that Joseph Schofield raised the level of the roof and added the half windows on the third floor about 1840. Since then the building has not changed significantly.

### INSIDE.....

- Presidents Day Dinner*
- New Land Ownership Book*
- The Court Inn Shines Again*



## March Speaker Focuses On Gardens

The March meeting of the NHA will be held on Monday, March 20th at 8:00 PM at the Court Inn.

The special guest speaker will be Kathy Knight, a member of the BCCC Science Department and the Historical Preservation teaching staff. She will speak on "The Care and Feeding of Gardens." She teaches a course on the restoration of formal gardens and is in charge of the restoration of the Tyler gardens. *Kathy Knight*  
Members and Guests are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.

## Presidents Day Dinner a success

Our annual Presidents Day Dinner was recently held at the Temperance House in Newtown. Over 80 NHA members and guests attended the special event. The past years *Open House Tour* homeowners were honored and given certificates of appreciation. The evening was capped off by speaker Bob Mackin who gave an interesting speech on eating etiquette in the medieval days.

## Calendar of Events

### Annual Cocktail Party

Saturday, April 29, 2000

5-8:00 PM \$15.00

Lorraine Pentz 215-968-4357

### Goodnoe Elem. 5th Grade

Walking Tour of Newtown

Wednesday, May 17, 2000

### Architectural Walking Tour

Sunday, May 21, 2000 - Free

Leaves Court Inn at 2:00 PM

### Annual Picnic

Saturday, June 17, 2000

Social 6:00 Dinner 7:00 \$18.00

Marty Sutton 215-968-3211

### General Membership Meeting

Monday, March 20, 2000

8:00 PM at the Court Inn.

### Annual Meeting- Election of Officers

Monday, April 17, 2000

8:00 PM at the Court Inn.

## The Court Inn shines again

Our annual clean up day at the Court Inn was held recently producing sparkling results. Several NHA members and friends volunteered their Sunday morning to polish, scrub and clean. Special thanks go out to Joanne Nardo, Margaret Danese, Marty and Sue Sutton,

Ginny Francksen, Lorraine Pentz, Jeanette Rogers, Alan Andersen, Dolly Gish, Marian Dahlman, Dave and Mary Callahan and Paul Gouza.

## On Sale Now

At The Court Inn and Newtown Hardware House

### *CHANCELLOR STREET SCHOOL REPLICAS*

With the closing of Chancellor Street School in June after 128 years of service, this limited edition ceramic replica is a great keepsake. Schools are available for \$40.00 plus tax.

### *POSTCARDS*

Eight postcards depicting early Newtown scenes are still available for purchase for \$4.00. Scenes include the White Hall, Carriage Sales on North State Street, the Bird in Hand, the Grist Mill on Barclay Street, the Newtown Cigar Store, the Cornet Band, the Newtown Trolley and Brick Hotel.

### *"EARLY NEWTOWN" A Pictorial Presentation of Newtown, PA.,*

On its fourth and final printing, this popular book depicts early Newtown from days gone by. Copies are available for \$12.99 plus tax.

## Volunteers Needed

Any NHA member interested in being a host at the Court Inn on Sunday afternoons this summer should contact Paul Gouza at 215-579-0298. The Court Inn will be open on Sundays starting June 4 thru August 20, 2000, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Market Day Committee is still looking for volunteers to assist in planning Market Day. Anyone interested should call Laurie Gouza at 215-579-0298 or Mary Callahan at 215-968-3914.

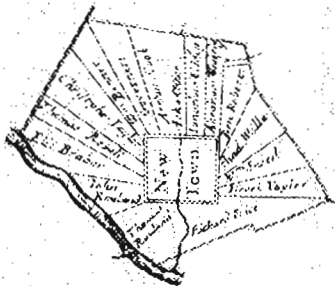
## A History of Land Ownership - Newtown

NHA member Tom Mayer recently wrote a new book entitled, "A History of Land Ownership Newtown Bucks County, Pennsylvania 1683-1850." His in depth research tracts land ownership of Newtown from the early days of William Penn.

Early Newtown was divided into 16 tracts radiating out from a center square that was simply called "New Town." Thomas Holme, first surveyor General for the proprietorship of William Penn depicts these

tracts on the "1687 Holme Map". Early owners included the names of Rouland, Price, Walley, Revell to name a few. One parcel was designated "Governor's," presumably retained by William Penn.

Most chapters begin with an orientation map showing the Patent land or major historic tract being analyzed superposed on a recent map of Newtown Township. Accompanying these orientation maps is a list of the historic resources that are located within the boundaries of the historic tract. Mayer states that an emphasis in this study was placed on identifying property lines that have been conservative: those that were established when Newtown was founded or were of other historical significance and continued to be recognizable today on contemporary maps. His hope was that this study will enable land planners and developers to identify and preserve historically significant features of our natural environment. Copies maybe purchased at the Court Inn for \$25.00 plus tax.



## Newtown Enterprise News - April 7, 1900

Higgins Bros.' third sale of horses came off at the White Hall Hotel, on Saturday afternoon last. Fourteen head were reported sold at an average price of \$129.66.

That was a considerable snow fall on Friday night of last week. On spots favorable for its collecting about four inches of the "beautiful" were to be seen Saturday morning. Much of the snow melted as it fell.

Drunken men were unusually plentiful in Newtown on Wednesday - some residents here and other strangers. Most of them men of know intemperate habits, and it is a mystery where they obtained their supply of firewater, for to the habitual drunkard licensed hotel keepers are prohibited from selling.

## Seeking old Photos

Anyone who has old photos (pre 1950) of Newtown and are willing to donate them or loan them to us for copying purposes should contact Brian Rounsavill at 215-579-2726. They would enhance our research center immensely.