



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
Dolly Gish - *Hon. Director*
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

Come Celebrate!

Join us in celebrating the 275th Anniversary of the *Half-Moon Inn*. See the website for the calendar of events.



New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Roberta Arrowsmith, *Newtown, PA*
- John & Joanne Godzieba, *Langhorne, PA*
- Dr. Joanne Hullings, *Bristol, PA*
- Derek, Erin & Mary Granados Lynch, *Newtown, PA*
- Tiffany Mann, *Holland, PA*

October Meeting

The October meeting of the Newtown Historic Association will be held on Monday, October 20th at 8 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. The meeting will feature a lecture entitled, "*Haunted Bucks County*". Spend a spooky hour learning about ghosts, apparitions and other things (the Jersey Devil?) that go bump in Bucks County, and perhaps answer the ultimate haunted Bucks County question: Is New Hope really the most haunted place in the County? 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.



Open House Tour

The 46th Annual Holiday Open House Tour will be held on Saturday, December 6th from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. In the event of inclement weather, the tour will be held on Sunday, December 7th.

The following private homes and public buildings will be featured:

- **The Bird in Hand** - 111 South State Street (c. 1686)
- **Barnsley House** - 125 North Chancellor Street (1902)
- **Hartman House** - 101 Madison Street (2007)
- **Watson House** - 322 East Washington Avenue (1906)
- **Whitehead House** - 155 North State Street (1810)
- **Anthony Petsis & Associates** - 127 South State Street (1822)
- **Macedonia Baptist Church** - 218 North State Street (1953)
- **Newtown Fire Association** - 14 Liberty Street (1901)
- **Newtown Library Company** - 114 East Centre Avenue (1912)
- **Newtown Borough Hall** - 23 North State Street (1858)
- **Half-Moon Inn** - Court Street & Centre Avenue (1733)
- **The Stocking Works** - 301 South State Street (1889)

The Court Inn will feature open hearth cooking, colonial music and re-enactors. Mulled cider and cheese will be served throughout the day. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance on the [NHA website](http://www.newtownhistoric.org) or the Newtown Hardware House For information, call (215) 968-4004.



Unsolved Mysteries are Like Untied Shoelaces...

- by Richard N. Mansley -

The original telephone request from Carson Callis, of Rockport, Washington, was quite simple. Could the Newtown Historic Association supply information about the Brick Hotel? Of course, we agreed to send him some information, and then we received several more phone calls in which he revealed the real reason he was interested in the Brick Hotel. He was preparing a family genealogy for a high school project, and was interested in obtaining information about a relative named Bernice La Brene who lived in Newtown between 1830 and 1835. Did we have information about this young girl of about 18 years of age from France?

According to his family history, she had a romance and marriage with a man with the surname Layton, and had a son named Louis Napoleon Bonaparte Layton. In the course of our research, we were able to discover quite a bit of information about the son, but that shall be saved for another story. Unfortunately, a search of all the available, and most logical records, of the Newtown Historic Association did not reveal one single reference to the mother, Bernice La Brene. The search included marriage records, death records, family histories, township and county records, orphans court records, cemetery records, etc.

Undaunted, we turned to the National Archives in center city Philadelphia to search immigration records and census records in an attempt to verify if and when the mother arrived, and when Louis Layton was born, which could have been in the late summer, fall, or early winter of 1834. We knew from information

provided by Mr. Callis, that Bernice La Brene died a few months after the baby was born. However, microfilms and the most sophisticated computer programs yielded not a single clue.

Following another lead, we were told that she was supposed to have had some association with the Buckman family. This clue was pursued, but no mention of any Bernice La Brene could be found. We were also told that Louis Layton was raised by the Heston family. While this possibility was investigated, and yielded some details of his life, no mention was made of his mother. In desperation, a brief search was conducted of the marriage and death records in the Bucks County Historical Society, but they too yielded no clues.

According to the family records of Carson Callis, the marriage of Bernice La Brene to Mr. Layton was annulled by his parents. Therefore, the divorce records of Bucks County were checked. However, it was determined that annulments may not have been recorded as such, in the divorce records. Unfortunately, the last lead and historical reference sources came up empty.

As we have repeatedly stated to patrons doing genealogical research at the Newtown Historic Association, some relatives simply do not leave a "paper trail." And so, unless some reader of this account should know the story of Bernice La Brene, this mystery shall remain as unsolved and as untidy as a pair of untied shoelaces.



19 North State Street. Photo Courtesy of the NHA Archives.

Hutchinson House Memories

- by Marie Hutchinson -

The Hutchinson family has been in Newtown for many years. The original immigrant, Lawrence Hutchinson, was born in Ireland in 1835. He arrived in the United States on April 18, 1857. He married Jane Fox, who was born in County Kildaire, on November 17, 1860 in St. Mark's Church in Bristol, Pennsylvania. They settled in Newtown, where he was a blacksmith. When his youngest child, William, was only two years old, Lawrence died.

William Hutchinson grew up and married Elizabeth Bye on October 12, 1893 in St. Andrew's R.C. Church in Newtown. They had nine children and they lived in a house that stood at 19 North State Street. The house was located at the site of the Veteran's Plaza in Newtown, just to the right of Borough Hall (*visible at left in photo above*).

Inside the house, a large table dominated the small kitchen. Cooking was done on a coal stove and an ice box sat on the side porch. A shed at the rear of the house was used for William's business, which was as an agent for the Adams and American Express companies. He drove to Newtown Station in a horse and buggy, and later a truck, to pick up packages. As in most homes of that period, the entertainment was provided by the piano in the living room.

Until 1963, when the house was demolished, members of the family always sat in rocking chairs on the front porch enjoying the sights and sounds of Newtown. Hutchinson children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have enjoyed many fond memories of the house that once stood at 19 North State Street.



Heinz Heinemann, Richard Mansley, State Rep. David Steil, Brian Rounsavill, David Callahan and Harriet Beckert

Document Room Officially Opens on "Dave Callahan Day"

September 13th was officially declared "Dave Callahan Day" in Newtown by a special proclamation from Newtown Borough Council. The declaration was made in recognition of David Callahan receiving the Pennsylvania Volunteer of the Year Award at the 18th Annual Pennsylvania Downtown Conference held in Gettysburg, PA earlier this summer.

David's nomination was wholeheartedly supported by the entire Newtown community, including the Newtown Business and Professional Association, the Borough Council, the Mayor, the Newtown Historic Association, the Retailers Association, the Newtown Corporation, and many other local organizations. The owner of the Newtown Hardware House, Callahan supports and is involved in many local organizations and activities throughout the borough.

A highlight of the day was when State Representative David Steil presented David Callahan with a special citation signed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as a tribute to his exemplary citizenship and work within the community.

Representative Steil then formally opened the oversized document room with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Half Moon Inn. "With a \$7,000 state grant, the Newtown Historic Association turned an underutilized area of the Half-Moon Inn into the new document room with the help of a Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) grant," said association member Dave Callahan.

Antique Appraisal

Is that painting in your closet a masterpiece? Are you keeping pennies in an old vase that might be worth a small fortune? Or maybe that garish lamp that Aunt Millie left has a value beyond your dreams! Bring a favorite item or two for appraisal by the experts accredited by the International Society of Appraisers. As part of the year-long events celebrating the 275th Anniversary of the Half-Moon Inn, the Newtown Historic Association will be sponsoring an Antique Appraisal Day. The Half-Moon Inn will be the venue for this interesting and fun event on Saturday, October 4, 2008 from 1 to 4 PM. Local Appraisers will be on hand to verbally examine, identify and appraise up to three objects per person. There will be a nominal fee per object. Funds raised from this event will be used to operate and maintain the Half Moon Inn. Attendance at this event is limited.

Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- Carriage House Collection
- David J. Witchell Salon & Spa
- DeFrehn Corporation
- First National Bank of Newtown
- Gemmi Construction, Inc.
- Harold Beck & Sons, Inc.
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Newtown Hardware House
- Newtown-Jamison Physical Therapy
- Peruzzi Automotive Group
- ReMax Properties, Ltd.
- Stockburger Chevrolet & Chrysler
- Stuckert and Yates
- The Law Office of Paul R. Beckert, Jr.
- Thomas-Guy Design, Ltd.
- Waitkus Design Landscape Architects
- Wright Realty Solutions LLC

Market Day Recap

The 32nd annual Market Day colonial craft fair was held on Saturday, September 13th. The day turned out to be very nice and enjoyable for the many visitors who browsed over 60 craftsmen and demonstrators. Candle making and children's craft activities were again very popular, along with the Militia encampment by the First Crossing Volunteers in the backyard of the Half Moon Inn. There was open hearth cooking by Susan Plaisted who cooked a whole pig on a spit while "A Better Way Farms" Belgian draft horses pulled the very popular hayride. Music and entertainment was provided by The Boys from County Bucks, the "Out of Tuners" and the Greentown Juggler. Area food vendors who participated in our "Festival of Foods" were Isaac Newton's and Lee's Hoagie House. The kettle korn by "Best Darn Kettle Korn" and funnel cakes by the Irish Lassie were popular as usual. The winner of the raffle to the Queen Victoria Inn in Cape May, New Jersey was Maria Rounsavill of Newtown (*after first refusing and being randomly selected again*). Overall, it was a very nice day. The Market Day Committee would like to thank everyone who helped make this event a success!

November Meeting

The November meeting of the Newtown Historic Association will be held on Monday, November 17th at 8:00 PM at the Half Moon Inn. Margaret "Peg" George, a noted author and politician, will present a lecture entitled, "*The Role of Women in World War II.*"

Some New Accessions

- Framed Illustration of the Old Court Buildings in Newtown by T. S. Kenderdine – *Glenn & Barb Hains*
- Army Dress Uniform from Vietnam War – *James Wolverton*
- 35mm Slides from the 275th Anniversary Celebration of Newtown – *George Stockberger*
- Radio Interview "Life in Newtown in 1928" by Lucretia Mammel and Raymond Cornel and "Breakfast at Goodnoe's" by Louise Collins, 1982 – *Ken Mammel*
- Barnsley & Related Families Photo Album – *Robert & Ann Bartels*
- Court Inn Archaeology Documents Pertaining to the Excavation of the Root Cellar – *Roberta Taylor*
- Fuhrer Family Photographs – *Ron Steeninger*
- "The Naming" Booklet by C.K. Little, Jr. – *Clayton Little, Jr.*
- Photograph of 19 North State Street – *Marie Hutchinson*
- Tin Cups Advertising Local Real Estate and Insurance Agencies – *Frank Fabian*
- Buckman, Williamson, Fells and Sotchers Genealogies; Photograph of George Buckman – *Patricia Levinson*
- 275th Anniversary of Newtown Flag; Lake Placid Olympic Games Flags; and Photos from the 1983 Performance of "Sweetland" – *Mary Bethman*
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church Pew Door – *Mary Callahan*

Upcoming Events

- **Antique Appraisal**, Oct 4, 1:00 pm.
- **General Membership Meeting**, "Haunted Bucks County", October 20. 8:00 p.m.
- **General Membership Meeting**, "The Role of Women in World War II", November 17. 8:00 p.m.
- **Open House Tour**, December 6.

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.
