

NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

WINTER NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE TOUR

The 29th annual Christmas Open House Tour in Newtown will take place on Saturday, December 7, otherwise known as the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor day. The NHA is looking forward to again hosting this popular event, and this year will open twelve home and other properties in addition to the Court Inn for public inspection.

President Eleanor Janney reported at the October Board of Directors meeting that all is in readiness for this gala event. Most of the properties on the tour this year are within easy walking distance of each other, therefore, the lines and inordinate waiting experienced in years past should be kept to a minimum. Jitney bus service will be provided with Skip Trowbridge serving as our traffic engineer this year. Mary Alice Hagan has been busy rounding up hostesses and reports that considerable progress has been made in that sphere. With cooperation from Weather Central, this year's tour is shaping up as one of the most appealing in history.

On a more pragmatic note, the tickets this year are \$10.00 per person. Tickets will be available for sale at the Council Rock High School Parking Lot (look for our RV), the Court Inn, and at Newtown Borough Council Chambers. Tickets bought in groups of 10 or more are \$9.00. Advance sales are available by writing the Newtown Historic Association or by purchase from Rhodes Newtown Flower and Gift Shop, 103 S. State Street, Newtown.

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

Margaret Danese of Ways and Means reports that the NHA gift shop will be set up for business at the Home Owners Reception on November 17 from 2-4 and on December 6 from 5-7 in the Court Inn. Margaret and her committee are very excited about their new items this year-- Rowe pottery, Santa Christmas tree toppers, needlepoint Christmas stockings, button covers, silver jewelry, Monkey Puzzles, many decorations for the tree, and numerous other gift items. Margaret and her committee always do a great job, and this year will be no exception. Be an early bird, get there early, and buy, buy, buy!

COURT INN NOTE

President Janney announced at the October Directors meeting that the Court Inn will not be available for public use from November 15 through the second week of December to allow time for Christmas Tour preparations. Those interested in visiting, touring, or using the Inn for meetings at other times should contact Ernie Millard.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Plans are set to create a museum shop on the second floor of the Inn in order to better accommodate merchandise gathered by our Ways and Means Committee. Also, a quilt rack will be installed as has been suggested to the Association by a number of quilt experts for improved preservation of quilts. Finally, a closet will be built on the third floor of the Inn for storage of old garments owned by the NHA. All this to take place in the next several months.

THE NEWTOWN CEMETERY CHAPEL: AN HISTORICAL NOTE

In response to a growing interest in the Association for the preservation and revitalization of the chapel at the Newtown Cemetery, Dolly Gish of the Library Committee found the following news item from the NEWTOWN ENTERPRISE, dated October 7, 1882:

"The neat little chapel erected in the Newtown Cemetery has been completed for over a year, but its dedication was postponed until it was completely furnished. Now it is nicely carpeted, has a heater in the cellar, and it presents a very handsome appearance. At the appointed hour, 2:30 P.M., on Saturday last, the house was more than full. The exercises were opened by prayer, by Rev. J.S. Cook, after which there was singing by an amateur choir, when Capt. Wm. Wynkoop, on behalf of the trustees, stated the object of the meeting: that the cemetery was out of debt, all the improvements paid for, with a snug sum in the treasury, and one-third the grounds not yet laid off into lots. He then introduced Rev. W. Dayton Roberts, of Philadelphia, who delivered the dedicatory address. He commenced by giving an account of the form of burial by the different ancient people, and that all nations introduced some religious ceremony at funerals. More particularly was this a Christian custom. He then dwelt on the evidence of a future state of existence, and how the idea had been held in all ages, but was more fully brought to light by Christ in his teachings, and by his death. He then alluded to monuments, and said that the best monument a person could have was a well-spent life and a blessed memory, some good he had done during the short passage from time to eternity. It was a very elegant and impressive address, which was listened to with much attention....

The ceremonies were not intended to be of a sectarian nature, and ministers of different denominations were present and participated. Quite a number of Friends were present, though, as a society, they do not believe in forms, ceremonies and dedications. The choir consisted of Misses Lucy Woodruff, Fredda Heyd, Elsie Van Dyke and Lizzie Trego, sopranos, Alice Heyd, Katie Wynkoop and Fannie Church, altos, A.S. Shelly and Wm. Wynkoop, tenors, A.W. Watson, Harry Smith and J.F. Church, bassos, and Miss Hattie Savage as organist."

Seating capacity in the chapel was 130 according to the Enterprise. There is now hope that the chapel will be restored to its former grandeur and to its original use.