

NEWTOWN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Summer 1998 Issue
David C. Callahan, President

Helen F. Randle &
Lorraine H. Pentz, Editors

CALENDAR

Sunday, August 9
8:00 a. m.

Fence Painting at Court Inn
(See article below)

Tuesday, September 8
7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

Saturday, September 19

Market Day (See article on page 3)

Monday, October 5
7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

Monday, October 19
8:00 p.m.

Membership Meeting – Patricia Stallone, who gave us excellent programs on Women in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, will Present “Women in the Second World War”.

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED IN APRIL

Two-year Terms

David Callahan, President
Paul Gouza, First Vice President
Martin Sutton, Second Vice President
Ann Linkenheimer, Recording Secretary
Mary Callahan, Corresponding Secretary
Eleanor Janney, Treasurer
Lois Molloy, Board Member

Four-year Terms

Ann Balderston, Board Member
Lorraine Pentz, Board Member
Barbara Reeder, Board Member
Brian Rounsavill, Board Member

HELP WANTED - FENCE PAINTING

The fence around the backyard of the Court Inn is badly in need of painting. Newtown Hardware House will furnish the paint. New posts have been donated by Frost Watson Lumber and they were cut by Eric Johnson and installed by Dave Callahan and Paul Gouza. We plan to work on Sunday, August 9 starting at 8:00 a.m. If you would like to help, bring a 2" nylon paint brush and join us. Lunch will be provided.

PURCHASE OF THE THORNTON-HICKS HOUSE

The result of the proxy sent to members of the Newtown Historic Association regarding the purchase of the Thornton-Hicks house at 107 Court Street was an overwhelming approval and the sale took place on July 1, 1998. A generous gift of \$5,000 towards the purchase was received from Ruth La Rue with her proxy.

THANKS!

We, Helen and Dolly, would like to thank all of the Historic Association members who made contributions to the fund set up in our honor at the time of our delightful reception on March 29; and to advise you of how the sum of close to \$2,000 was used. We agreed to allocate the proceeds toward a down payment on the purchase of the dwelling immediately south of the present Court Inn, at 107 Court Street, known as the Thornton/Hicks house, having been constructed for Margaret Thornton and subsequently occupied by Edward Hicks. The property now is in the ownership of the Newtown Historic Association and we have welcomed the opportunity to be part of providing for the preservation of such a significant piece of Newtown history in such a convenient and historic location. We are grateful to all who participated and to the committee members who provided us with the opportunity to make this choice.

Helen Randle
Dolly Gish

RAIN HOLDS OFF FOR STEAK FRY

The Annual Steak Fry held on Saturday June 20 was no exception to the usual good times experienced at these affairs held every year for the simple purpose of good fellowship and enjoyment of members and friends. Chaired by Marty Sutton and Jeanette Rogers, the committee consisted of Linda and Skip Trowbridge, Sue Sutton, Lois and Joe Molloy, Georgia Koenig, Lorraine Pentz, Ann Linkenheimer, Paul Gouza, Eleanor Janney and Mary and Dave Callahan, with Mike Donovan and Richard Koenig doing a suburb job on the hot grills. The five dozen or so attendees enjoyed good food, lively conversation and laughter. The rain held off until clean-up time and failed to dampen the happy spirits present.

LAMPPOSTS INSTALLED AT BOONE GARDEN

The Boone Garden has been indeed a delight this year, with roses spilling over the fence to greet passing strollers. Now it can be admired at night, thanks to the recent installation of two Philadelphia cast-iron lampposts. This inspiration began with our dear friend, Board member and former President, Ernie Millard, whose Memorial Fund was set aside for that purpose. Subsequently, our ever-willing, ever-pleasant member and helpmate Jack Sutterly, passed away and funds given in his name were added, followed by a fund in memory of Terry McCarty and other donations. Ernie's dream is realized and we all benefit, as well as visitors to our town. The sight of those Philly lampposts was a particular thrill to me because one stood at the entrance to my home on two block long Penn Street in Queen Lane Manor, Philadelphia for the 30 years I grew up and resided there. It marked the end of the 50-yard dash (There was another on the other side of the street at 100 yards.) It also presented a challenge to every kid on the block – to climb up it unaided and straddle the crossbars. We decorated it for our annual snapper soup party (when the men took over our kitchen and spent an entire day preparing a one-dish meal with the aid of free-flowing "spirits"). We used it as a base for hide-and-seek. It was painted green and the lamplighter arrived every evening with his torch. Those were the days!

Helen Randle

Market Day will soon be Here!!!

Market Day, our annual colonial craft fair will be here on **Saturday, September 19th**. We have **over 60 crafters** signed up at this point with **many new ones**.

We will be having a **Silent Auction** this year again headed up by Vince Stefani. Last year's Silent Auction was a huge success and we are looking forward to this year surpassing last year so look for things you can donate toward this event.

We will be having "A Better Way" Farm here with their team of horses and wagon to give everyone horse drawn **hayrides** around the Court, Penn, Congress and Mercer Sts. block.

Our ever successful **Festival of Foods** with local Newtown restaurants offering delicious luncheon treats.

We will be having some **new and different activities** this year at Market Day. We will be having **children's crafts** in the backyard of the Court Inn, headed up by Mariann McKee, a teacher at Goodnoe Elementary along with her helpers. We will offer sessions on quilling, whirring sticks and punched tin. There will be a nominal charge to cover materials. Skip Gittens will be doing his **candle making** in the backyard too and the children love to help him with that. Another new and exciting feature will be the **Starbucks Café Theater** which will be set up on North Court St. This will be a theater storytelling session by Karen Vuranch of West Virginia which is being completely underwritten by Starbucks. We will have a stage for the performance which will be at 1:00 PM, and small café tables and chairs for people to sit in to enjoy their Starbucks coffee.

We need volunteers to help in the following areas - ticket sellers for the hayride and the funnel cake sales, volunteers to help set-up early in the morning, help with trash removal area during the day and then clean up at 4:00 PM, and probably other areas which will come up later. Please call Mary or Dave Callahan 968-3914 at home in the evenings if you can help. We need our members to pull together to make this a successful day.

Market Day Committee

Mary and Dave Callahan, Barbara Swanda, Laurie Gouza and Gail Blandy

July 8, 1998

WALKING TOUR AND RECEPTION

The Walking Tour and Reception, held on Sunday, May 3, was a rousing social and educational success. Conducted by Jeffrey Marshall, of the Heritage Conservancy, the Tour drew a crowd of about 75 and brought some new members into our fold. Jeff pointed out some features of buildings on State and Court Streets which were news to even some of the die-hard old-timers, and managed to convey his message to the unexpectedly large audience in spite of pauses for air and street traffic interruptions.

THE EDWARD HICKS IN NEWTOWN COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

While the art and artifacts from Newtown are on a two year tour, The Newtown Government, The Newtown Historic Association, and The Newtown Library Company will cooperate to make all aware of the town where Edward Hicks lived, worked, and preached. MaryJane Crumlish will coordinate events for the *Edward Hicks in Newtown* Committee. The first event is to be the *Farewell Party* scheduled for October 1999 when Newtown's contributions join the tour. Please contact MaryJane Crumlish at 968-5448 to volunteer for helping at the party, to suggest ideas, and to pitch in with your time and talents.

EDWARD HICKS SPECIAL SLIDE PRESENTATION

William J. Kreidler, noted author and teacher will present a slide presentation "**Edward Hicks: Lessons from the Peaceable Kingdom**" at the Friends Meetinghouse on Court Street, Newtown on Sunday, October 4, 1998 at 1:30 p.m. Hicks worshipped at the Newtown Friends Meetinghouse and he is buried in the cemetery on the grounds. There will be a tour of the meetinghouse, special children's activities, and refreshments.

CHANCELLOR STREET SCHOOL REPLICAS

The Historic Association has purchased ceramic replicas of the Chancellor Street School to be sold at Market Day and the December Open House Tour. Delivery is expected sometime around the middle of September. In the meantime, a sample is on view in the window of the Newtown Hardware House. We are including an order form with this newsletter. For more information, call Mike Donovan at 968-4153.

Peale's Museum

It was a place full of wonder and excitement, a place where for over fifty years the unimaginable was often on display. It was the famous Peale's Museum in Philadelphia and for the price of a 25 cent ticket a visitor could experience "Wonderful works of NATURE! and Curious works of Art --- The Birds & Beasts will teach thee!" Founded by the noted American portraitist and craftsman Charles Willson Peale, the museum opened next to his house at the corner of Third and Lombard Streets on July 18, 1786 as one of the country's first museums of natural history. In 1794, he rented the hall of the American Philosophical Society at Fifth Street below Chestnut and later the Legislature granted the use of the second floor of the State House (Independence Hall), where his museum was expanded and attracted international attention.

Some of the specimens which Peale acquired for his museum, he collected in the neighboring countryside and mounted with the assistance of his sons. He also received donations including a pair of pheasants shot and mounted by George Washington. Lewis and Clark also presented Peale with many specimens and American Indian artifacts acquired during their famous expedition. In 1799 Peale listed his holdings as including over 100 quadrupeds, 700 birds, 150 amphibians, and thousands of insects, fishes, minerals, and fossils. Additionally, the museum also had a zoo where live animals such as a grizzly bear could be viewed up close.

Peale also collected and displayed in a special area various specimens of unknown creatures and biological oddities. Some called it "the chamber of horrors." One of his earliest unidentified specimens was a lizard from Louisiana presented by President Thomas Jefferson. Other strange additions to the museum included black bugs (supposedly "cast up" from a Maryland lady's stomach), a mummified animal and Egyptian head, a devilfish captured off the coast of Cape May, a two-headed pig, a root resembling a human face, and a five-legged cow with two tails. Peale's museum also displayed previously known animals which were the first of their kind to be displayed in America, for example, an ant-eater and a camel-leopard, or giraffe.

Of course, a visit to Peale's Museum was considered incomplete without having your "shade" taken as a souvenir. Silhouettes were extremely popular in the early 19th century, that is up until the invention of the "Daguerreotype", and Peale was the first to "mass produce" silhouettes in large numbers. He accomplished this by modifying a machine called the "physionotrace" with an ingenious stencil mechanism invented by his assistant Issac Hawkins. The machine enabled "any steady hand in a few moments" to "produce a correct indented outline" of the sitters profile. Peale's hollow-cut silhouettes, sometimes described as cold and rigid, were a commercial success.

The Newtown Historic Association is very fortunate to have recently received a donation from Kathy and Larry Fink of two wonderful examples of Peale Museum silhouettes. The silhouettes are impressed with "Peale's Museum", which is the second rarest of three known stamps documented. Although you won't see any black bugs or two headed lizards, these Peale Museum silhouettes and many items from this period of Newtown's history can be viewed at the Court Inn, Center Avenue and Court Street, Newtown.

Michael Swanda