



The Half Moon

The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association



IN THIS VOLUME:

- NHA wins NAC Have a Heart Award
- Newtown's "Hungry Ten"
- Plans for our Semiquincentennial
- History of Countryside Gardeners

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 and activities in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

Officers

Barry Fleck, President
William Mahler, First Vice President
Brian Rounsavill, Second Vice President
Mary Jo Garner, Recording Secretary
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
Rich Seidner, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Keyna Crawford
Paul Gouza
Dan Griffin
Bronwyn Jones
Betsey King
Geno Peruzzi
Richard Speranza
Susan Thompson
David Walton
Honorary Life Director – David Callahan
Parliamentarian – Tim Potero

Callahan Research Center

100 Mercer Street
Newtown, PA 18940 USA
Research Center Hours:
Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
And also, by appointment

New Members

John Donato & Twain Gonzalez, Michael Gray, Jeremy & Diane Hoffman, Jeff Hogge, Shawn & Elle Kaplan, Thomas Kovacevich, Ryan & Ashley Kube, Anne Matthews, Fred Moore, Gary & Cathie Pickell, Susan Pirritano, Patricia Thomas, Gina Tomasello, Sam & Linda Yosen



Upcoming Calendar

February:

- 2/5: **Annual Recognition Dinner** - 6:00 p.m. cash bar, 7:00 p.m. dinner, Temperance House
- 2/21: **General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

March:

- 3/20: **General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

April:

- 4/17: **Annual Report & General Meeting** at 6:00 p.m., Bucks County Community College
- 4/29: **Annual Spring Cleanup** at 8:00 a.m., Court Inn

For further details, visit www.newtownhistoric.org.

NHA Wins NAC Have a Heart Award

For over 40 years, the Newtown Athletic Club (NAC) has been giving back to our community and beyond. One of its charitable initiatives for 2022 was [52K in 52 Weeks](#) whereby the NAC gave away \$1,000 each week in the year to a different charity, nonprofit, or urgent cause.

On December 28th, 2022, [the award was granted to the Newtown Historic Association](#). Linda Mitchell, NAC Have a Heart Director, presented the award on behalf of the NAC to NHA Officers and Board members: President, Barry Fleck; First Vice President, Bill Mahler; Director, Keyna Crawford; and Corresponding Secretary, Caroline Bennett.

Barry Fleck, Linda Mitchell, Bill Mahler, and Keyna Crawford



Barry Fleck and Linda Mitchell



The NHA expresses our sincere appreciation to the NAC for this award. It is only through the generosity from our community and members that we are able to continue our efforts to preserve Newtown's unique heritage.

Do You Have Historic Items to Donate?

If you have historic items to donate to the NHA (pictures, letters, research on a property or family, furniture, etc.), please contact us at (215) 968-4004.

Court Inn Improvements

Improvements continue at our beloved Court Inn. During the recent heating system improvements, workers discovered that basement sewer pipes were cracked. These pipes have since been replaced.

Court Inn: New Sewer Pipes



In addition, the exterior cellar doors have been replaced.

Court Inn: New Cellar Doors



(Photo: Neale Messina)

October General Meeting

Our October general meeting was presented by the Newtown Theatre and the Newtown Historic Association. It was held at the theatre and the speaker was R. Scott Bomboy, author of "Wooden Treasures: The Story of Bucks County's Covered Bridges."

NHA Second Vice President, Brian Rounsavill, delivered the speaker introduction.

Brian Rounsavill and R. Scott Bomboy



R. Scott Bomboy



The presentation was quite interesting, especially for those of us who continue to use the remaining bridges, and the event was very well attended. The question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation engaged the audience even more.



During the event, the Market Day raffle winners were selected by

NHA volunteer, Mary Callahan, and NHA Board member, Susan Thompson. The winners were Jeanne Haeckel and David Leder. The prizes were gift certificates for \$200 to either the Black Bass Hotel in Lumberville, PA or the Golden Pheasant Inn in Erwinna, PA.

Mary Callahan and Susan Thompson



Our New Newsletter Design

You may have noticed something different about this issue of our newsletter.

The new design of our newsletter has been professionally and creatively conceived by one of our new members, Dave VanBlarcom.

Thank you, Dave, for expressing interest and stepping forward to join the NHA's team of incredible volunteers.

The Newtown Historic Association could not accomplish all that we do for helping to preserve and protect historic Newtown without our volunteers.



November General Meeting

Our November general meeting was presented by NHA member, Gary Albaugh. Gary shared his research that examined the New York/New Jersey boundary disputes from the creation of the Royal Colonies in the 17th century through the final determination of the current boundary line that presently exists.

Gary Albaugh



Approximately 20 people were in attendance—some being quite familiar with the areas mentioned during the presentation as evidenced during discussions.



The Hungry Ten

by Rick Speranza

If you have ever driven north past 225 to 245 South Lincoln Avenue (towards the CVS), you may have wondered, “What’s the story behind the set of 10 row houses on the east side of the street?”

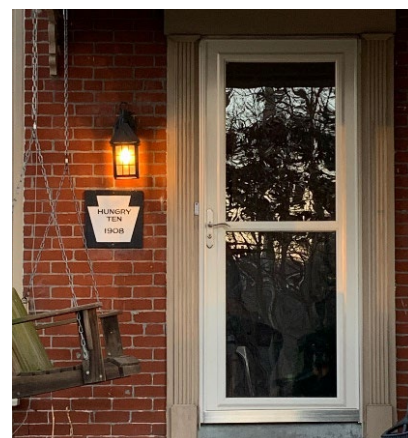


These 10 identical brick row houses, known as the “Hungry Ten,” were built by the Newtown Improvement Company between 1908 and 1909. The company, chartered in 1878, also built the nearby Stocking Works as well as other buildings around Newtown. The Hungry Ten were intended to provide Newtown’s working-class laborers affordable housing, which at the time meant around \$9 to \$11 per month for rent!

Design elements of the houses included cement lintels that simulate keystones, unique two-over-ten windows, and decorative free board that was interrupted at the division of each house.

The nickname for these homes stems from the tenants the houses attracted, which included laborers and their families from local factories and businesses. These included the Newtown railroad, the U.S. Bobbin and Spool Works, Newtown Pottery, Worstall’s Feed and Flour Mill, Kenderdine’s Coal Yard, and others. During the Great

Depression, it is said that the families who occupied these dwellings had no money to buy food, despite the affordability of the houses, hence the nickname the “Hungry Ten.”



Today, one would be hard-pressed to get a good lunch for the same amount that would have gotten you a month’s rent back then. Of course, the houses were devoid of electric, bathrooms and running water as late as 1920, yet still considered a good bargain!

The property itself has an interesting history, which can be traced to Edward Hicks’ in-laws, Joseph and Susanna Worstall. Edward Hicks owned the property himself when he died in 1849.

If you are interested in learning much more, [click here](#) and stop by the NHA Callahan Research Center and take a look at “A History of 241 South Lincoln Avenue,” Part of the “Hungry Ten” Block, Newtown, PA, prepared by the Historic Preservation Department of Heritage Conservancy, November 1994.



Annual Holiday Open House Tour

Photos: Neale Messina

Our Holiday Open House Tour is always held on the first Saturday in December—rain or shine (with one known exception—during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020).

This year, for the 59th tour, the rain decided to pay us a visit until early afternoon, but it did not dampen spirits. The houses and public buildings were open for visitors, and ticket holders showed up and enjoyed their day.







NHA Walking Tour App

This is a reminder that the NHA Walking Tour app created by Council Rock High School North student and Boy Scout, Gavin Kohler, is up and running, and available for download from the Apple store by using the QR code on the right.

The NHA Walking Tour app contains content, photos, and other information on approximately 40 historic sites throughout Newtown. Each 'stop' in the app includes an audio-visual display that users can watch and listen to on their iPhones.



This app augments the current Newtown walking tour marked by the informative signs that the NHA placed in town over ten years ago.

If walking is a new year resolution, then this app is a great tool to help get you started, stay motivated, and learn about some Newtown history—all at the same time.



Annual Recognition Dinner

Our annual recognition dinner to honor those homeowners and public building stewards who participated in the 2022 Holiday Open House Tour will be held on **Sunday, February 5th, 2023, at the Temperance House**. Cash bar begins at 6:00 p.m. and the dinner begins at 7:00 p.m.



During this event, we will be recognizing two volunteers with the Innkeeper Award as well as five homeowners and four public building stewards for their participation in the house tour. In addition, there will be a slideshow playing of photos taken by Neale Messina on the day before and day of the tour.

Tickets include a salad, plated dinner, and dessert, and are available on our website at www.newtownhistoric.org or call Keyna Crawford at (267) 679-9287.



February General Meeting

Our February general meeting will be held in the **Court Inn on Tuesday, February 21st, at 7:30 p.m.** The presentation title is "William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania."

In 1681, William Penn, with the signature of King Charles the second, became the largest land holder in England. His fledgling colony would become the Keystone to the development of a nation. Come explore the history of our founder and the beginning of our colony of Pennsylvania with Doug Miller, the director of William Penn's home Pennsbury Manor, at our February meeting.



March General Meeting

Our March general meeting will be held in the **Court Inn on Monday, March 20th, at 7:30 p.m.** The guest speaker is Kevin Kerchner. Kevin will be sharing and



discussing "A Few of His Favorite Things" from his extensive antiques collection.

Annual Report and April General Meeting

The NHA annual report and April general meeting will be held at **Bucks County Community College on Monday, April 17th, starting at 6:00 p.m.**

The annual report portion of the evening will occur **from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Room 311 of the Library** and admission is free.

The general meeting will be a joint meeting between the NHA and BCCC, and will take place immediately after the annual report from **6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the main auditorium of the Zlock Performing Arts Center** (which is located adjacent to the Library). The guest speaker is Daniel Tyler, grandson of George & Stella Tyler. The presentation, "[Bucks County's Benevolent Squire: In Search of George Frederick Tyler](#)" (Daniel's new book), will be followed by a behind-the-scenes tour of the Tyler mansion—rooms that are generally off limits to the public. Admission is \$20 and the online link for registration will be made available in advance of the event.

Parking is free. Both locations can be found on the [BCCC campus map](#).

Our Semiquincentennial by Brian Rounsavill

If you are middle-aged, like me, you have fond memories of the Bicentennial celebration that swept across the nation back in 1976. Patriotic colors adorned the classrooms and hallways at school, people dressed in red, white, and blue, or collected bicentennial quarters, while the highlight of everything was the local town parade. If you were lucky enough, you were able to march in a parade with your scout troop, homeroom, or friends on your decorated bicycles. Those memories are firmly etched in our minds from the Nation's 200th anniversary celebration (1776-1976).

Boy Scouts of America, Troop #20, pull Old Washey in the 1976 Newtown Bicentennial Fireman's Parade. Some identifications: Chris Ford, Bill Richmond, David Nemeth, Ken Basely and, bringing up the rear, David Cover.



Fast-forward fifty years and here we are quickly approaching our nation's 250th anniversary (1776-2026), otherwise known as the Semiquincentennial. The United States Semiquincentennial (also called Sestercentennial or Quarter Millennial) will be the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of

Independence of the Thirteen Colonies in 1776. Festivities will be scheduled throughout the United States to mark various events



leading up to the anniversary on July 4, 2026.

To celebrate the Semiquincentennial, a group of volunteers at the Newtown Historic Association are creating an historical display showcasing Newtown's vast history through the centuries, spanning from the 1600s to the 2020s. Each century will highlight notable achievements and facts in Newtown's decorated past. For example, the 1600s will include Leni Lenape Indians, William Penn, and Newtown's founding in 1684. The 1700s will tell the story of Newtown's role in the Revolutionary War. The 1800s will focus on the Victorian Era, which was a time of vast political reform and social change, and the Industrial Revolution. The 1900s will center on the Progressive Era, where Newtown grew from a rural farming community, dealt with World Wars, and saw factory output grow, while small businesses flourished. Finally, the 2000s will center on Newtown's continued development, 9/11, COVID-19, and other significant milestones.

The NHA's Semiquincentennial exhibition will be displayed in a timeline fashion across two rooms on the second floor of the Court Inn. Interesting and unique

artifacts, photographs and memorabilia will be used to tell the story of Newtown's notable past. The Semiquincentennial displays will be comprised of a blend of wall-mounted photos and text combined with relevant artifacts displayed in custom display cases. Pulling together a comprehensive display of this magnitude will be quite an undertaking, but the Newtown Historic Association is already taking steps to create a wonderful learning experience for all to enjoy.

NHA volunteers are also creating rotating historical displays in the center room on the second floor, which currently displays quilts and textiles and is adjacent to the Semiquincentennial display rooms. The intent is to rotate this center room's historical contents on a quarterly basis to continually keep the community informed and engaged, and motivated to return on a regular basis.

We will keep you posted as the Semiquincentennial displays develop over the next two years, and we welcome input from our membership. If you have any questions or are interested in learning more, please contact Brian Rounsavill at rounsavills@gmail.com.



History of Countryside Gardeners

by Lydia Parry Lewis

Countryside Gardeners was founded in 1933 after much discussion by three women interested in the art and science of gardening. These women were members of the Doylestown Nature Club. Some women felt the need for a smaller club in the Bucks County area. On September 6, 1933, fifteen women met to discuss club names. Garden Rakes was proposed, but many felt it was too rakish for such earnest gardeners. Countryside Gardeners was the accepted title. The club was accepted into the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania.

Some early members were Mrs. William Mercer Jr. (Aldie Mansion), Mrs. Charles Harper Smith (Smith corona Typewriter), Mrs. Welsh Strawbridge (Graham Park), and my grandmother, Mrs. Henry C. Parry of Langhorne, PA. The club participated in many Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve projects such as planting maiden hair ferns, Christmas ferns, wild columbine, and dogwood trees. Our club continues the affiliation with the preserve.

Mary Parry was elected President of the Federation in 1937 with the motto: "Give to the world your best and the best will come back to you." She was also instrumental in the establishment of Bowman's Hill. Mrs. Atlee Burpee (Lois) of Burpee Seeds joined the club in 1938. I remember having lunch

and a meeting at her home at Ford Hook Farm in Doylestown. I have a photo of her in my home. I knew all the aforementioned women.

In 1940, several club members went to the New York World's Fair Gardens on Parade. Mrs. D. Bruce Moyer entered a colorful mass flower arrangement of pyracantha, azalea, and dried cryptomeria in a painted tin container. The club held a Federated flower show every year and entered the Philadelphia Flower Show several times, and that tradition still stands. The club decorated the chapel at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station beginning in 1944 using a lovely large wooden crèche belonging to Margaret Strawbridge. I remember years later helping to decorate the chapel and having a delightful luncheon hosted at the base.

The membership of the club is now limited to 40 members. We continue to meet the first Monday of the month except for July and August. In early years, meetings were held in private homes serving a delightful luncheon with hats and gloves a must.

Several years ago, the club became affiliated with Newtown Historic Association, and we now meet at the Half-Moon Inn on Court Street in Newtown, PA. We serve coffee and tea with breakfast goodies. Hats and gloves are not required. We have a business meeting and a speaker, and we go on excursions. We learn about a variety of topics like gardens, flowers, design, birds,

herbs, and famous gardens, and we take trips to local gardens.

In addition, we take care of the NHA gardens and decorate the Half-Moon Inn in Williamsburg style for the NHA Holiday Open House Tour in December. Using fresh greens, fruits, vegetables, and other natural cuttings, club members spend a day working together creating wreaths for the doors, swags for the fences and many centerpieces that decorate the windowsills, tables, mantles, and shelves throughout the Inn.

We continue to grow as individuals and together as a club. The founders would be very proud of the continuation of their club.

For more information or to join, contact Mary Jo Garner at maryjogarner1@verizon.net.

Countryside Gardeners at Work





New Accessions

- Sunny of Sunnyside, a play by grades 3 to 6 of Newtown Borough schools, 1939 program – John Orr
- Blueprints of store for C.H. Bunting at 21 S. State Street, Newtown, PA, June 16, 1950 – William Lutz
- Items and documents related to First Night Newtown – Carrie Wetherby
- Various pamphlets and books related to Newtown, PA: class of 1950 Council Rock High School photograph at Mt. Vernon; class of 1952 Council Rock High School at Washington, DC; Newtown decorative plate; Newtown Reliance company decorative plate; Goodnoe commemorative milk bottle – Eric Pannepacker

Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- ALP Supply Inc.
- Fred Beans Automotive Group
- Lin Bethman Auto Center, Inc.
- C&N Bank
- DeFrehn Roofing Services
- Mary Dinneen, Realtor
- First National Bank & Trust of Newtown
- Harold Beck & Sons, Inc.
- J. McLaughlin
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Newtown Business Association
- Wm. B. Parry & Son, Ltd.
- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- Quantum Learning, Inc.
- SDG Holdings I, LLC
- Stuckert and Yates
- T & T Tree Service
- The Dave Marcolla Group - Keller Williams Real Estate
- Waitkus Design