



The Half Moon

The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association



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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
Brian Rounsavill, First Vice President
Richard Speranza, Second Vice President
Mary Jo Garner, Recording Secretary
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
Rich Seidner, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Keyna Crawford
Kathy Gonsalves
Paul Gouza
Dan Griffin
Betsey King
Geno Peruzzi
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

Karen Brown, Susan Fillmore Brown Irving, Grace Jacobs, Mariann Patricella, Bill & Valerie Reed, Edward P.H. Richardson, Gregory Scimeca, Laura Shepherd, Frederick & Lynn Sorrels, James E. & Mary Thompson, Nancy Webster



Upcoming Calendar

April:

- 4/17: **Annual Report & General Meeting** starting at 6:00 p.m., Bucks County Community College
- 4/29: **Annual Spring Cleanup** at 8:30 a.m., Court Inn

May:

- 5/12: **Historic Walking Tour** at 6:00 p.m., Court Inn
- 5/29: **Tribute to Local Veterans** at 10:00 a.m., Callahan Research Center

June:

- 6/10: **Spring Garden Cocktail Gala** at 5:00 p.m., Court Inn
- 6/24: **Garden Walk** at 8:30 a.m., Court Inn

For further details, visit
www.newtownhistoric.org.

Annual Recognition Dinner

by Keyna Crawford; Photos: Neale Messina

Every year, we like to honor those homeowners and public building stewards who so graciously opened their homes and buildings for the Holiday House Tour, one of the NHA's most attended events.

This year's annual recognition dinner to honor those who participated in the 2022 Holiday Open House Tour was held on Sunday, February 5th, 2023, at the Temperance House. At this year's dinner, we gave special thanks to Jeff Hogge, John Donato and Twain Gonzales, Jeremy and Diane Hoffman, Shawn and Elle Kaplan, and Ryan and Ashley Kube for

allowing us to share in their beautifully decorated homes. Also honored were Dave Rolewicz and Nyla Houser of the Newtown Presbyterian Church, Henry Pietrowski and Dennis O'Brien of the Newtown Library Company, and members of the Newtown Fire Company.

The NHA is comprised of many people who volunteer untold hours of their time. This year, two very special people were honored for their excellence and history of giving. Craig Hackett was recognized not only for his time but for the many prints of historic buildings and local regions of interest that he has donated to the NHA. The NHA has benefited from considerable fundraising because of these donations. In addition, Lorraine Pentz was recognized for years of service to our association, serving on the Board of Directors, and acting as Committee Chairs with special devotion to the enormous task of Head Hostess and staffing of the homes for the House Tour. And we always admire the ease with which she and Jeanette Rogers and company decorate the Court Inn with fresh flowers for the Spring Garden Cocktail Gala.

Over 50 guests attended the dinner in the newly-restored banquet room of the Temperance House. A slide show of the homes, buildings, and event-day patrons was photographed, edited, and created by Neale Messina, and was on view for the evening. There was a cash bar available and savory

entrees of Beef Tenderloin, Lemon Chicken, and Broiled Salmon. Were served.

This event is traditionally held on the Sunday between the last NFL/AFL playoffs and the Superbowl. Please join us in February 2024!

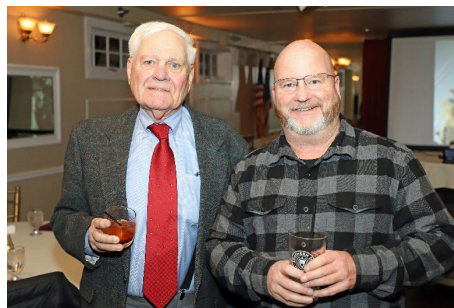
Barry Fleck, President, and Craig Hackett



Barry Fleck and Lorraine Pentz



Annual Recognition Dinner (cont'd)



Annual Recognition Dinner (cont'd)



February General Meeting

Our February general meeting was held on Tuesday, February 21st, 2023. The speaker was Doug Miller. Doug is the director of William Penn's home, Pennsbury Manor.

Doug Miller



Doug gave an interesting, informative, and engaging lecture. The presentation title was "William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania." It was a full room with about 50 people in attendance.



The hour-long talk went by too quickly. It concluded with a lively question-and-answer session.



March General Meeting

Our March general meeting was held on Monday, March 20th, 2023. The guest speaker was local Newtown resident, Kevin Kerchner.

Kevin Kerchner



Kevin's presentation title was "15 things" from his extensive antiques collection that focused on a drinking theme. It included both American- and British-made items, predominantly from the mid-18th century: cups, bowls, a key basket, silver lottery coins, an original William Penn land grant, a wallet, tavern tokens, a traditional Pennsylvania chair, and more.

March General Meeting (cont'd)



Refreshments were provided after the presentation. With a full room and spirited audience participation, it was another successful event.



Did You Know?

(Excerpt from the *Daily Democrat*, Doylestown, October 21, 1912)

Department of Local History:

The Lenni Lenape Indians

The Stroudsburg Record is publishing a very interesting series of historical articles on "The Pocono Region." The article last week on the Indians in this section is reproduced here, in the belief that it will be read with much interest by those who have been following the Democrat's Department of Local History.

The Indian tribes who dwelt in the Pennsylvania forests at the time of William Penn's arrival in the Province call themselves the "Lenni Lenape" or "Original People," notwithstanding an obscure tradition among them, that their ancestors ages back had emigrated here from the Mississippi and expelled a more civilized nation—probably the "Mound Builders"—the evidences of whose settlement are scattered over the great Western Valley of the United States and in Pennsylvania.

The Lenape Indians (generally known as the Delawares) spoke the language and were separated into three main divisions of which tribes of the "Unami" (People down the river) with totem of the turtle; and the "Unalachtigo" (People near the sea) with the totem of the turkey, dwelt between the Atlantic and the Kittatinny or Blue Mountains extending as far south as the Potomac, while the "Minsi" (People of the stony lands or mountains) with the totem of the wolf, the most active and war-like of the whole nation, occupied the mountainous region between the Kittatinny Mountains and the sources of the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers, "kindling their council fires" at the Minisink flats above the Delaware Water Gap.



(<https://delawaretribe.org/home-page/about-our-tribal-seal/>)

Callahan Research Center Chimney and Roof Repair

The old chimney at the Callahan Research Center has not been used for many years because the new heating system is vented by PVC piping.

The chimney started to leak and needed to be removed. The roof then needed to be repaired. The work was performed by a corporate member, DeFrehn Roofing.



NHA Walking Tour App

The NHA Walking Tour app is available for download from the Apple store by using the following QR code.



Annual Report and April General Meeting

The Newtown Historic Association annual report and April general meeting will be held at **Bucks County Community College (BCCC) 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 Rollins Hall Room 139 (Gallagher Room)** 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 9:00 p.m. in the main auditorium of the Zlock Performing Arts Center**. The guest speaker is Daniel Tyler, grandson of George and Stella Tyler. The presentation title is, "George F. Tyler: A Synergy of Being and Doing."

Mr. Tyler is a retired professor of history at Colorado State University and author of "Bucks County's Benevolent Squire: In Search of George Frederick Tyler." He will show how his grandfather and grandmother, Stella Elkins, managed to represent the class of "Perennial Philadelphians" into which they were born, while at the same time used their talents and inherited wealth to benefit society. In addition, Matthew Metcalf, Coordinator of Historic Preservation at BCCC, will provide an informative overview of the

architectural history of the Tyler mansion.

After the lecture, attendees will be provided with a private, behind-the-scenes tour of the Tyler mansion. The special tour will include rooms that are generally off limits to the public.

Tickets for the general meeting are \$20 and can be purchased at <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/TylerHistory>.

Parking is free. Refer to the [BCCC campus map](#) for parking and building locations.

Annual Spring Cleanup

Our annual spring cleanup day at the Court Inn will be held on **Saturday, April 29th, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**



We are seeking volunteers to assist with the cleanup. No experience necessary. Please come help us and have some fun making the Court Inn shine again, especially those who are interested in helping with our buildings and grounds.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Gouza at pgouza12@gmail.com.

NHA Newsletters

If you would like to revisit previous newsletters, you can find them on the Newsletters page of our website:

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/about-us/newsletters/>.

NHA Receives a Grant

by Bronwyn Jones

The Half-moon Inn was built in 1733 and it is now 290 years old. The original stone foundation under parts of the Inn are in serious need of restoration. While the foundation in one room of the basement has been restored, the rest is all original and needs to be fixed. There are sections where the stones have completely fallen out of the walls and others where large sections of the mortar between the stones is completely missing. Given that the foundation supports the Inn structure, this is something that needs to be addressed.

The NHA is undertaking to repair the most serious issues with the foundation in two of the five basement rooms with the Half-moon Inn Stone Foundation Restoration Project. With this in mind, the NHA applied for and received a Bucks County Tourism grant from Visit Bucks County to begin the needed repairs. The \$2,500 grant, along with funds from the NHA, enabled the restoration to the mortar joints of the foundation under the front entry room at the Inn. Country Stonework completed this work using historic lime mortar.



NHA Receives a Grant (cont'd)

Completed Mortar Joint Restoration of Foundation Under Front Entry Room at the Inn



There is one other basement room, under the Tavern Room, that needs to have the mortar joints restored and finished using original colonial ridge pointing. The needed funds for this room are \$10,300 and are yet to be secured.

(The NHA greatly appreciates Bronwyn Jones for volunteering many hours of her time to prepare and submit this grant application, secure the contractor, and see this project through to completion.)

Historic Walking Tour

The Historic Walking Tour of Newtown will take place on **Friday, May 12th, starting at 6:00 p.m.** in front of the Half-moon (Court) Inn. The tour will be led by local resident and historian, Jeff Marshall.

Jeff Marshall



The event typically lasts about an hour. On this year's walk, Jeff plans to lead the group down Washington Avenue, if conditions will allow for this.

Come join the fun, learn some history, and get some exercise (so please wear comfortable shoes).

Tribute to Local Veterans

The Newtown Historic Association will hold its annual Memorial Day tribute to honor local military veterans of World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam on **Memorial Day, Monday, May 29th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at the Callahan Research Center.



Come and see over 100 pictures of local soldiers who fought in these wars. This collection was created by Mike Donovan, a past NHA member and history buff.



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.

Annual Spring Garden Cocktail Gala

Save the date for the Newtown Historic Association's annual Spring Garden Cocktail Gala on **Saturday, June 10th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** at the Half-moon (Court) Inn.

Join your neighbors and friends as you wander among the gardens of the Inn. Hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, and cocktails will be served.

Tickets are \$45 a person for members and \$50 a person for nonmembers. All proceeds will go towards continuing maintenance of the Half-moon Inn. Tickets can be purchased online at www.newtownhistoric.org.



New Accessions

- Newtown Rod and Gun Club Minute book, Newtown Township Future Land Use Plan, Newtown Township Sewage Feasibility Report, miscellaneous pamphlets, brochures, and photographs related to Newtown, PA and Bucks County, PA – Susan Thompson
- Figures 1-5, Supplement to the Bucks County Historical Society Journal, Fall 1977, showing

maps of Newtown Township – Historic Langhorne Association

- Photographs of the Brown, Fillmore, and Lauble families, newspaper article about Robert Brown and the 1921 Bryn Athyn railroad crash, and obituary of Charles B. Ermentrout – Susan Irving
- Photographs of Richard Fillmore and the Tyler estate (18) – Karen Brown

Annual Garden Walk

We are seeking proud garden owners who would love to include their garden in the NHA Annual Garden Walk. We are not limited to Newtown Borough this year as we will be including some Newtown Township gardens to which participants can drive. If you are interested, please contact Mary Jo Garner (215-858-0939, maryjogarner1@verizon.net) or Keyna Crawford (267-679-9287, keynawcrawford@gmail.com).

The Garden Walk will occur on **Saturday, June 24th. The check-in time at the Half-moon (Court) Inn will be 8:00 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. The walk will commence at 8:30 a.m.** We hope to see you then!



Special "Meet and Greet" Event

The NHA will hold a "meet and greet" event at the Half-moon (Court) Inn on **Wednesday, April 26th, at 7:00 p.m.** for about an hour for those who are interested in volunteering their time to help staff the Inn during the summer and beyond.

Come learn about this exciting opportunity and bring a friend along! If you have any questions, please contact us at (215) 968-4004.

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



You Beautiful Jerkinhead

by Rick Speranza

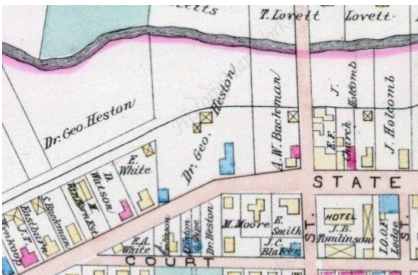
See that strange, stubby looking dormer? That's a jerkinhead roof on a wonderful old Newtown house.

The Heston House



The Heston House stood on South State Street near where the liquor store is today. John's Barber Shop was a carriage house on the same property and is shown on the 1886 atlas.

1886 Atlas, Dr. George Heston



The rear portion was built in 1723, as evidenced by a date stone found when the house was demolished. The two-story front portion of the house was built in 1798 by Aaron Phillips, blacksmith, who tore down the old log house and blacksmith shop. The log house was rumored to be the home of

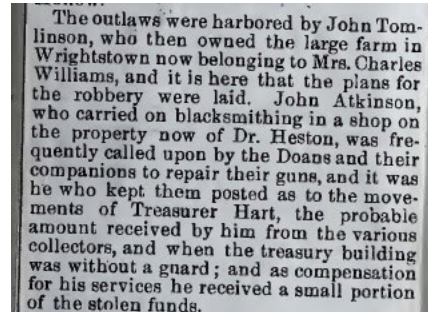
one of Newtown's first settlers, James Yates. Another possible location for Yates' home is this.

Date Stone from Original Portion of House

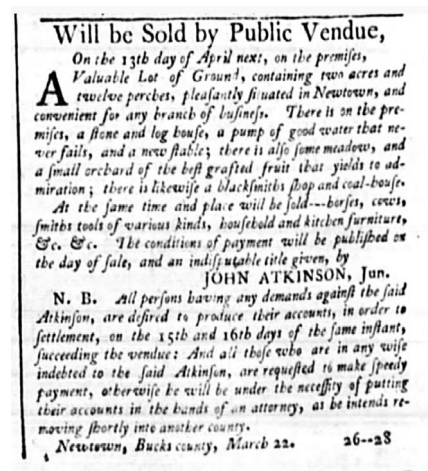


John Atkinson, whose involvement with the Doans of Plumstead is well known, lived in the house during the Revolution and carried out blacksmithing from his stand on the property.

Atkinson's Doan Connection



Atkinson Property for Sale



Heston House Real Photo Post Card (RPPC)



A story goes that one owner of the house and his wife didn't live the happiest of lives together, so the wife lived in the front and the husband stayed in the rear of the house.

Rear, Original Portion of House Circa 1723



Unfortunately the house was razed in 1967 to expand the parking lot of Stockburger Chevrolet. Another beautiful Newtown house gone too soon.

(A reminder that the NHA's Callahan Research Center is open on Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and by appointment by calling us at (215) 968-4004.)

Semiquincentennial Exhibition Update

by Brian Rounsavill

Plans continue to move forward with the Semiquincentennial Exhibition that will be installed on the second floor of the Half-moon Inn. Over the past few months, we have received donations that will cover the majority of the costs for developing the exhibit and displays.

The NHA's Semiquincentennial Exhibition will be displayed in a timeline fashion across two rooms on the second floor of the 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.

Each of the six walls in the two rooms will have a different wall mural background over a timeline of significant dates in Newtown's history. The timeline will consist of 28 significant date panels on the following subjects.

1681: William Penn	1867: Turnpike
1682: Penn's Treaty	1872: Railroad
1684: Newtown's Founding	1889: Electricity
1726: County Seat	1897: Trolley
1733: Court Inn	1914: World War I
1737: Walking Purchase	1930s: Depression
1776: Revolutionary War	1940: World War II
1778: Loyalist Raid	1955: Flood
1781: Doan Gang	1962: Washington's Headquarters
1811: Agriculture	1976: Bicentennial
1815: Edward Hicks	1977: Newtown Bypass
1831: Newtown Hall	1980s: Suburbanization
1838: Newtown Borough	2001: 9/11 Attacks
1861: Civil War	2026: Semiquincentennial

After the wall graphic timeline is installed by the contractor, the committee will focus on the curation of the physical items to be displayed and the creation of the exhibit display cases and stands. It should be noted that the same contractor has agreed to a similar, materials-only, offer to create the display boxes and stands.

We expect to have the full-length wall murals installed this month, so individuals visiting the Half-moon Inn can begin to enjoy them.

Once the wall murals are installed, the NHA will send a notice to our membership.

The real work will be reviewing the accessions and determining which artifacts to display. The committee will spend the next year or more on that part of the project.

If you have any questions or are interested in learning more, please contact Brian Rounsavill at rounsavills@gmail.com.



Semiquincentennial Exhibition Update (cont'd)

NHA Semiquincentennial Exhibit: Wall 3 Mural

1831: Newtown Hall

Originally built in 1831 for gatherings and as a non-sectarian church for traveling ministers, Newtown Hall (as it was then called) soon became the center of entertainment in Newtown. By the early 1850s, the Hall was used regularly for performances, which ranged from social dances and concerts to theatrical productions and magic lantern shows. Throughout the 1850s, Newtown Hall hosted anti-slavery meetings, which included sermons by Lucretia Mott and Frederick Douglass, major figures in the reform movement of the 19th century. In 1883, after a fire, the building was reconstructed larger than the first, and designed with stage performances in mind. In 1906, the first motion picture was shown here, the Miles Brothers short film showing the city of San Francisco before and after the devastating earthquake and fire, making it the oldest continuously operating movie theater in the United States.

1838: Newtown Borough

The village of Newtown had been settled as part of Newtown Township until it was incorporated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania General Assembly as a borough on April 16, 1838. In 1854, Newtown Borough Hall was built at 21 North State Street to serve as the council chambers and a lock-up (jail). Interestingly, the German mason who built the walls became the first prisoner, when he was jailed for pig-stealing. The distinctive Greek revival structure has served borough officials since its opening in 1858 and is said to be the oldest borough chambers in the state still in use for its original purpose. The Borough, which is entirely surrounded by Newtown Township, was enlarged four times since 1838, and its buildings show excellent examples of all major architectural styles.

NHA Semiquincentennial Exhibit: 1962 Timeline Date Panel

Washington's Headquarters, Glass Negative, c. 1900.
Source: Newtown Historic Association.

View of the site where Washington's Headquarters once stood, 2008.
Source: Newtown Historic Association.

1962: Washington's Headquarters

During the Revolutionary War, General George Washington commanded America's Continental Army for several days from the brownstone house located at the intersection of Swamp Road and Sycamore Street. The original house was torn down in 1863, and completely rebuilt on the old foundation, of similar lines, out of the stone from the original Headquarters House. When the brownstone house was hastily demolished by developers in 1962 (the second and final time the house was razed), it inspired a chain of events that resulted in the formation of the Newtown Historic Association in 1964 to stimulate interest in, and preserve, the history of Newtown.

Newtown Historic Association United States Semiquincentennial Exhibit

Thornton Descendants Visit the Inn

The Newtown Historic Association was delighted to welcome Maribeth and Wes Payne from Poplar Bluff, Missouri for a tour of the Half-moon Inn.

Maribeth is a direct descendant of Margaret Gale and Joseph Thornton and an active member of her local DAR chapter. They contacted us and arranged to visit family in the Philadelphia area and to see her ancestral home in Newtown.

It was a wonderful opportunity to exchange information about the Thornton family and to explore the Half-moon Inn with them. We thoroughly enjoyed their time with us and look forward to a time when they can return.

Wes and Maribeth Payne



Energy Cost Savings

by Rich Seidner

Last year, the NHA installed new storm windows, and converted the heating system from oil to natural gas, in the Half-moon (Court) Inn.



This year, we contracted for more favorable natural gas rates with a new energy supplier. These new rates will take effect this month.

We have already seen very positive reductions in our energy costs with these improvements and, once the new gas rates become effective, we are expecting to see a potential 30% reduction in our overall energy costs for the Court Inn.

We will be taking the same approach with our electricity costs to continue to build on these positive changes to our energy strategy.