

The Half Moon

The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association



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- The American Revolution, Ken Burns, and Our Council Rock Connection
- Tribute to Members

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

Dan Griffin, President
Brian Rounsavill, First Vice President
Richard Speranza, Second Vice President
Mary Jo Garner, Recording Secretary
Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
Lori Michelin, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Keyna Crawford
Paul Gouza
Betsey King
Jeff Marshall
Geno Peruzzi
Amy Smith
Susan Thompson
Gina Tognini
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

Lawrence & Robin Moses, Anne Drennan & Paul
Shneidman, Marisa Pilla Design, Tomasello Appraisals &
Advisory



Upcoming Calendar

September:

- 9/15: "A History of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.)" at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn
- 9/21: **Tyler State Park Walking Tour** at 10:00 a.m., Tyler State Park, Newtown

October:

- 10/4: **Market Day** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Court Inn (rain date is 10/5)

November:

- 11/17: "Spotlight on the Golden Rod House" at 7:30 p.m., Court Inn

December:

- 12/6: **Holiday Open House Tour** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For further details, visit www.newtownhistoric.org.

Annual Business Meeting and April General Meeting

The NHA Annual Business Meeting and April general meeting was held in the Half-moon (Court) Inn on April 21st, 2025.

The Annual Business Meeting was conducted first. It included the election of Directors and Officers for a new term and a review of the organization's events over the past year.

The following nominees were approved to serve as a Director or Officer for the April 2025 to April 2028 three-year term:

- Brian Rounsavill, First Vice President
- Caroline Bennett, Corresponding Secretary
- Keyna Crawford, Director
- Geno Peruzzi, Director
- Dave Walton, Director

President Dan Griffin opened the Business Meeting and reported on the successes over the past year. Treasurer Rich Seidner spoke about the solid fiscal position of the organization.

Dan Griffin, President



Rich Seidner, Treasurer



The Annual Business Meeting was followed by the general meeting ("Treasures from the Attic"), which was presented by Board members Mary Jo Garner and Keyna Crawford.

Mary Jo Garner, Officer, and Keyna Crawford, Director



Preservation Month

Each year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) celebrates Preservation Month. This year's theme was "Harnessing the Power of Place" and the celebration month was May.

We joined the NTHP to celebrate the preservation of our beloved historic Newtown. We posted an image daily on social media along with some history about it. We hope you enjoyed the virtual tour!



Annual Spring Cleanup

Our annual spring cleanup day at the Half-moon (Court) Inn was held on April 26th, 2025.

We had some very special helping hands during this year's cleanup event. Seven ladies from the Washington Crossing Chapter of the D.A.R. participated.

Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to assist. It was a successful and rewarding day for all!



Annual Spring Cleanup (cont'd)



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 and Social Media

The Newtown Historic Association is active on social media. Be sure to follow us on Facebook (#newtownhistoricassociation) and Instagram (@newtownhistoric). We also have a separate presence for Market Day (#newtownmarketday, @newtownmarketday).



Tribute to Local Veterans

(Photos: Neale Messina)

The Newtown Historic Association held its annual Memorial Day tribute to honor local military veterans of World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam on Memorial Day, May 26th, 2025, at the Callahan Research Center. Over 100 pictures of local soldiers who fought in these wars were on display. This collection was created by Mike Donovan, a past NHA member and history buff. Also on display were letters written by soldiers containing their private thoughts and moments as they experienced war. In addition, more than 300 World War II military shoulder patches from the U.S. Army, Army Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard were on display.



Tribute to Local Veterans (cont'd)

(Photos: Neale Messina)



In addition to pictures, letters, and patches, military uniforms from four Newtown veterans were on display at the Callahan Research Center for Memorial Day.

World War I

John R. Lauer (1889-1961); U.S. Army Cavalry

World War II

Edward R. Barnsley (1906-1989); U.S. Army

William R. Campbell (1917-1985); U.S. Coast Guard

Viet Nam

James A. Wolverton III (b. 1945); U.S. Army National Guard (cover image)

New Heritage Walk Signs

The NHA is pleased to report that two new Newtown Heritage Walk signs have been installed. One sign is located at the southwest corner of South State Street and Penn Street. This sign highlights the four centuries of architecture represented by the surrounding buildings.

Four Centuries of Architecture



The second sign is located in front of the Enterprise Building at 126 South State Street. This sign highlights the history of the building which was built in 1874.

The Enterprise Building



The Newtown Heritage Walk is a self-guided walking tour consisting of thirty-six 18" x 24" wayside markers at historically significant sites in Newtown Borough and Newtown Township. Each stop has been selected because of its historical value to the community.

Visit the following link to learn more about the Newtown Heritage Walk.

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/visit/walking-tours/newtown-heritage-walk/>

The Inn is Open!

If you or your friends and family have wondered what the inside of the Half-moon (Court) Inn looks like, it's time to plan your visit. The Inn is open on **Sundays until October 26th, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. except September 28th and October 5th**, and it has A/C.

You can tour the Inn at your own pace. We have beautiful self-guided booklets you can use. Volunteer docents will be on hand to guide you.

Admission is free but of course donations are always welcome. Please contact us at (215) 968-4004 if you have any questions.

We hope to see you!



Annual Spring Garden Cocktail Party

(Photos: Neale Messina)

The Newtown Historic Association's annual Spring Garden Cocktail Party was held on May 31st, 2025, at the Half-moon (Court) Inn. All proceeds from this event went towards the continuing maintenance of the Half-moon (Court) Inn.

Hors d'oeuvres were served along with wine, beer, and a few fun cocktails. Lucky winners of the raffle tickets are listed below.

- Craig Hackett "Spring Print": Christie and David Leder
- Craig Hackett "Outhouse with Hearts" Unclaimed ticket #864173 with no name (Please contact the NHA if you have this ticket!)
- Craig Hackett "Gotta Go Outhouse with Santa": Neale Messina
- Craig Hackett "Spring Garden Mill": Georgia Koenig
- NHA Past and Present book: Sandy Williamson
- Large basket of cheer generously donated by Maryalice and Phil Hagan: Tom Lynskey
- Bottles of wine and glasses with carrier generously donated by Mary Jo Garner, Brian Titus, and Janet Beasley

Approximately 65 people attended the event. The many smiles in the photos are evidence that the attendees very much enjoyed catching up with familiar faces and making new friends while experiencing the unique ambience of the Inn and its lovely garden.

The NHA extends our sincerest appreciation to all those who attended, the volunteers, those who donated food or a basket, Relic for providing food, and Wegmans for providing a gift card to purchase food. Your support and contributions were instrumental in the event's success.



Annual Spring Garden Cocktail Party (cont'd)

(Photos: Neale Messina)



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(Photos: Neale Messina)



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(Photos: Neale Messina)



Elementary School Walking Tour

(Photos: Gina Tognini)

The Newtown Historic Association conducted its annual Elementary School Walking Tour on Wednesday, June 4th, 2025.

Approximately 200 students from Goodhoe and Newtown Elementary Schools participated in the tour. They explored five historic sites, including the Half-moon (Court) Inn, Newtown Library Company, Newtown Fire Association, and Newtown Theatre.

The NHA has hosted this student tour for over 45 years. It provides the students an opportunity to experience and connect with our heritage and rich history.

Many thanks to the 35 teachers and chaperones, 18 volunteers, Newtown Borough Hall staff and Mayor Burke, and all the participating sites for their support and help with making this day a tremendous success. And the weather could not have been better!



Annual Garden Walk

(Photos: Amy and Andy Smith)

This year's Garden Walk occurred on Saturday, June 1st, 2025. Despite the sprinkles, this 9th annual event was enjoyed by approximately 50 people. It's a self-guided walk starting at the Half-moon (Court) Inn and lasting between 2 to 3 hours.

The NHA extends our sincerest appreciation to all property owners, volunteers, and participants who came out that day to help, enjoy the lovely gardens, and support the NHA.

All proceeds from this event went towards maintenance and improvements to the Boone Garden, which is owned by the NHA, located on Court Street directly across from the Half-moon (Court) Inn.



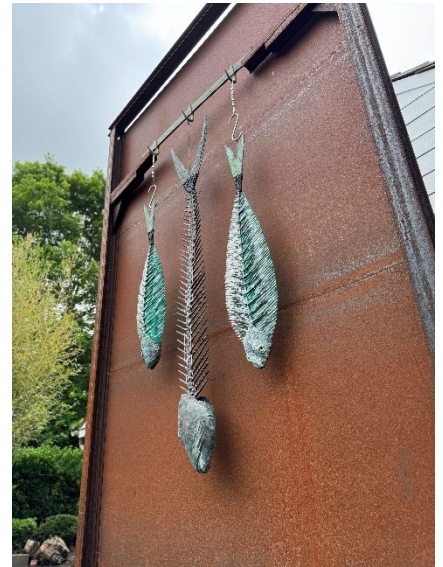
Annual Garden Walk

(Photos: Amy and Andy Smith)



Annual Garden Walk

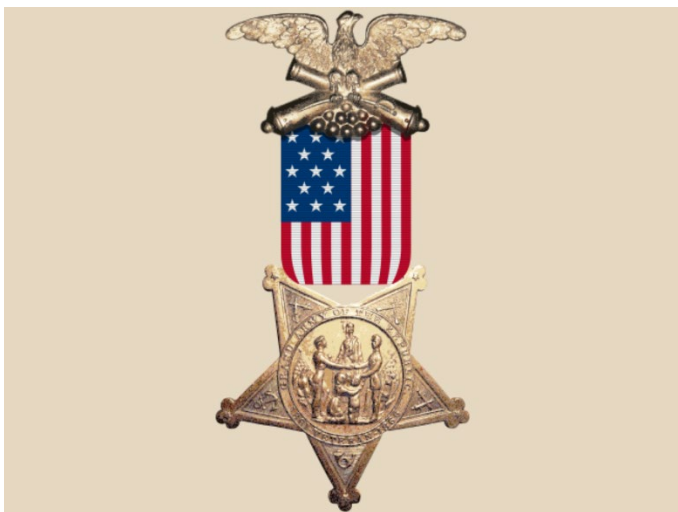
(Photos: Amy and Andy Smith)



September General Meeting

The NHA is hosting Patriotic Instructor Kyle Purchase for our September general meeting, which will take place on **Monday, September 15th, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the Half-moon (Court) Inn.** The title of the presentation is "A History of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.)."

Kyle will explain the history, impact and purpose of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), and discuss the auxiliary organizations of the G.A.R. that are still active today as well as the work and activities that these organizations do.



Kyle graduated from Widener University in May 2017 with a bachelor's degree in political science/ international relations with a minor in legal studies/ analysis and Temple University in May 2019 with a master's degree in public policy. He currently works as a Legislative Reporting Analyst for Pennsylvania Legislative Services. He has previously worked for a state representative's office and for a background screening firm. Kyle is currently a board member of the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum in Philadelphia, as well as a member of the Bucks County Civil War Round Table Library & Museum, and is a dual member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), being a member of both Baker-Fisher Camp #101 in Hatboro and Gen. John F. Hartranft Camp #15 in Harrisburg, where he serves as Camp Commander.

A question-and-answer session will follow the presentation.

This event is free for members. Non-members are also welcome to attend, and donations are always appreciated.

Tyler State Park Self-Guided Historical Walking Tour

The NHA will hold the next Tyler State Park self-guided historical walking tour on **Sunday, September 21st, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Tyler Park boathouse dam.** It will begin with an historical overview of the Tyler family, mansion, and park properties by Brian Rounsavill and a representative from the park.

If you don't already have a copy, please purchase the "History of Tyler State Park" book on the [NHA website](#)—preferably in advance of the event although copies will be available for sale at the event (\$16). This book provides you with the details on the self-paced and self-guided walking tour of the many historic Tyler State Park properties.

Once the overview concludes, you will be free to tour the park on your own with your book at your own pace.

Since there are so many interesting and historic sites scattered throughout the park, it is likely that it will take you more than one day to visit all the sites.



Get Ready for Market Day!

Market Day is an annual Newtown tradition in its 49th year that takes place in the historic borough streets. This event is highly anticipated by our close community and the surrounding Bucks County.

Market Day celebrates the colonial tradition of local farmers and homesteaders bringing their crops, livestock, and homemade wares into town to sell to neighbors and townspeople. It has transformed throughout the years to feature high-quality fine artists, crafters, and food artisans.

Market Day is family friendly, with colonial-era demonstrations, reenactments, and activities. There will be two stage areas with live music, our annual puppet show, and an eatery area with food from local restaurants, food trucks, and artisan bites.

We hope to see you at this year's Market Day on **Saturday, October 4th, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Rain date is October 5th.

We are looking for volunteers to make Market Day a success. **Please send an email to marketday@newtownhistoric.org with your contact information and availability.** Please note that it is preferable to be available for both days should we need the rain date. We hope to hear from you!

For those who would like to volunteer to help, please send an email to marketday@newtownhistoric.org.

Market Day is supported by generous sponsorships and donations by local businesses and supporters. Become a sponsor today and gain exposure for your business through the NHA website, social media, newsletter, banners on event day, and more. To discuss how your business can reach a broad audience of 3,000+ people before, during, and after Market Day, contact us at marketday@newtownhistoric.org or select [here](#) to complete an online sponsorship application.

November General Meeting

NHA Board member Jeff Marshall and Newtown Borough resident Rebecca Rescate will co-host our November general meeting, which will take place on **Monday, November 17th, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the Half-moon (Court) Inn.** The title of the presentation is "Spotlight on the Golden Rod House."

The Golden Rod House is located at 35 South Chancellor Street in Newtown Borough. Rebecca, her husband Chris, and their family reside in the home. Since 2021, Rebecca has been posting about the restoration of the house on Instagram (@thegoldenrodhouse) for several years.

Built in 1900, the year 2025 is the 125th birthday of the Golden Rod House. The presentation will start with Jeff sharing key points about the history of the house. Afterwards, Rebecca will speak about the restoration.

The Golden Rod House



Friends of Tyler Park History Hike

NHA First Vice President Brian Rounsavill will be leading a history-oriented hike for the Friends of Tyler Park related to America's 250th birthday on **Sunday, August 24th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** It will start at the Mill Dam parking lot and proceed along Tyler Drive all the way to the BCCC mansion. Attendance is free.



The American Revolution, Ken Burns, and Our Council Rock Connection

About two years ago, a “cold email” was sent to the Newtown Historic Association by Council Rock North and Penn State graduate, Megan Ruffe. In her email, Megan mentioned that she was working for Ken Burns on a new documentary on the American Revolution, and that they were looking for historic locations where they could film.

Of course, we responded to that email right away. Megan subsequently connected with then President Barry Fleck and explained that they would be filming at Washington Crossing and were hoping to combine a site visit with a visit to Newtown to make the trip more efficient.

Megan has been working on *The American Revolution* since 2019, whereas Ken Burns and his team have been working on it much longer. She works for Florentine Films based in Brooklyn, NY. Her job has been to scout locations up and down the east coast—from Maine to South Carolina—to find historic sites to support their filming needs. Megan explained that it was a challenge to find anything left of the Revolution for visual purposes. There were no photographs or film footage available. Their only visual resources consisted of paintings and documents.

Growing up, Megan was surrounded by Revolutionary history. She lived in Upper Makefield and could walk to Washington Crossing Park. She attended Newtown Presbyterian Church where, in the summers, the service was (and still is) conducted in their historic church on Sycamore Street. And she knew that Newtown Borough was very historic.

After the initial connection, Megan arranged a scouting visit on one of her trips to the area to check out the NHA headquarters, the Half-moon (Court) Inn. The NHA took great care with preparing the Inn. Kathy Gonsalves and Dave Callahan hosted Megan’s visit. Dave even lit a fire in the Tavern Room fireplace. What was Megan’s reaction after she saw all of it? “It was awesome.”

Megan and her colleagues returned in December 2023 and spent an entire day filming in the interior of the Inn. It was set with borrowed muskets from Washington Crossing Christmas river crossing reenactors—to make it look as if people just left the room. In post-production, Megan explained, they fill the video with sound effects to make it sound like a lively room. Kathy, Dave, and Susan Thompson were on hand to host and provide support from the NHA.

Megan visited hundreds of historic sites over the course of the project. To no surprise, Megan found that working with smaller sites run by local historical societies often allowed for more flexibility and personal connection. And she heard many stories along the way. One of the favorite parts of her job was meeting the people who care for these sites day in and day out—the stewards who work behind the scenes to keep things in tip-top shape and running smoothly. She was very impressed with their dedication and commitment, and her impression of the Newtown Historic Association was no different.

Like those who lived during the time of the Revolution, Megan acknowledged that young people today ask the same questions about current politics: “What does this have to do with me?” and “Why is this important today?” She’s hoping that the new documentary will help them make the connection.

The American Revolution by Ken Burns and his team was recently completed and delivered to PBS. It’s a six-episode series (2 hours each) and will air nationwide this coming Fall, premiering on Sunday, November 16th, and continuing through Friday, November 21st. As part of their July 4th broadcast, Good Morning America included this [piece](#) highlighting Ken and the series.



The American Revolution, Ken Burns, and Our Council Rock Connection (cont'd)

(Photo: Shyala Jayasinghe)



We hope we'll see our beloved Half-moon (Court) Inn at least once during the week that it airs. In the meantime, you can check out the trailer and the film's website [here](#).

Cinematographer Buddy Squires and Megan Ruffe film a recreated archival map in the Tavern Room at the Half-moon (Court) Inn.



Tribute to Members

The NHA is an active organization with general meetings, special programs, social events and, of course, Market Day and the Holiday Open House Tour.

In March of each year, the NHA sends previous year members a letter reminding them that it is time to renew their membership. Our membership year is April 1st to April 1st.

The NHA greatly appreciates the financial support from all of our new, renewing, and lifetime members.

Bob & Jennifer Abrahamson
Harris & Karen Abrams
Michael & Heidi Adams
Gary L. Albaugh
Roger & Nancy Anderson
Joseph & Priscilla Arbeiter
Charles & Stacey Bancroft
Andrea Bayford
Harriet Beckert
Caroline Bennett
Evelyn Boada
Kathy Bodine
Rosanne Bonaventura
Gina Tognini & Christopher Brill
Karen Brown
Norman B. Buckman
Kevin & Karen Buckthorpe
Leslie Calabrese
David & Mary Callahan
Regina & Ken Carlson
Jenny Yim & Nicholas Cavallaro
Carolyn Cavallo
David & Sandra Chantry
Leigh Clark
T. Jeffrey and Barbara Clarke
Marty Moss-Coane & James Coane
Leonard Colavito

Brian & Patty Connors
Michael & Kim Cosack
Rose Crane
Keith & Keyna Crawford
Jane Crumlish
Gail Foley & Chris Culleton
Donna Curran
Thomas Curry
Michael & Patricia D'Arcangelo
Warren & Donna Dallas
Bob Davis, Jr.
Ardelle Dick
Ken & Marian Disken
Edward Donner
Ed Dudek
John & Joan Elliott
Barbara Ermentrout
Frank & Dot Fabian, Jr.
Lee Ann & Lou Fancher
Thomas K. Fischer
Barry & Mary Fleck
Patrick Foster
Michael Foy
Leonard & Marilyn Franckowiak
Michael & Christine Franko
Nancy Freudenthal
Jim & Mary Jo Garner
Lois Gilbert
Douglas & Lee Gittens
Paul & Kathleen Gonsalves
Paul & Laurie Gouza
Daniel & Mary-Margaret Griffin
Karen Groff
Chris & Donna Gusty
Susan & Jon Guy
Michael Hackman
Stephen & Jeanne Haeckel
Philip & Mary Alice Hagan
Christopher & Johanna Hager
Nancy Halpin
Holly McClanen Hart
Kristina Hartley
Vincent & Karen Haugh
Renee Noel & Wayne Heacock
William & Linda Heinemann
Catherine Hill-Scaramuzzo

David & Charyl Kerns Hills
Dan & Susanne Hogan
Dr. Joanne Hullings
Mercy Ingraham
Susan Fillmore Brown Irving
Jane Johnson
Joan & John Johnston
Charles Ponciroli & Bronwyn Jones
Annamarie Kaminski
Shawn & Elle Kaplan
Terri Keane
Janet E. Keough
Kevin & Rebecca Kerchner
Eugene & Terry Kiely
Robert & Betsey King
Mary K. Kipnis
Clifford & Maryann Kline
Daniel & Debra Knott
Richard & Georgia Koenig
Thomas & Nancy Kovacevich
Mike & Lorrie Ksiazek
Ronald & Michele Kumor
Orli Zamora & Gary Laitman
Alex & Georgia Larounis
Steven & Felicia Laskey
Cristie & David Leder
Steven Lemken
Mary Louise Lennon
John & Mary Jane Leonard
Charles & Barbara Lewis
H. Paul & Lydia Lewis
Christopher & Christine Lilley
Charlene Lindsey
David & Patty Lynch
JoAnn Maguire
Jane Mahler
Dominick J. Manobianco
Mr. Richard N. Mansley
Don & Linda Marshall
Jeffrey & Rebecca Marshall
Daniel & Charie McAuliffe
Linda Koelzer McCoy
Dan McGovern
Christine McKee
Eduardo & Kelly Medeiros
Cathy Triverio & Larry Meinert



Tribute to Members (cont'd)

Shirley Mersky
Joseph & Lori Michelin
Barbara Hilton & Barbara Miller
Wayne & Cynthia Miller
David & Susan Minno
Philip & Mollie Mitchell
Lois A. Molloy
Pamela J. Moore
Lawrence & Robin Moses
Robert & Judy Musto
Jennifer Nelson
William & Martha Newell
Eric & Jenn Nicholl
Gerard & Bridget O'Malley
Craig Ogelby
John & Diane Orr
David & Andrea Page
John & Kathleen Parry
Mariann Patricella
David & Anne Pearl
Lorraine Pentz
Janice Perry
Geno and Amy Peruzzi
Ray Pete & Gretchen Peters
Michele Szumila & Steven Pettingill
Cathie & Gary Pickell
Henry & Marcia Piotrowski
Sheryl Rubin-Pitel & Grant Pitel
Ralph & Barbara Posmontier
Timothy & Elisa Potero
Edward P. H. Richardson
Stephen Rinear
Ray & Victoria Robb
Nicole & Robert Rodowicz
Jeanette Rogers
Marga R. Rogers
Burt & Carol Rothberg
Brian & Maria Rounsavill
Deidra Sarego
Randy & Nancy Scurlock
Richard & Gail Seidner
Jonathan Shain
Janet Shelly

Laura Shephard
Kris & Patrick Shields
Rena Shields
Anne Drennan & Paul Shneidman
Jeff & Eileen Siddell
Eileen Steele & Allan Slezak
Robert Small
Allan & Susan Smith
Andy & Amy Smith
Craig & Helen Smith
Mary Smithson
Frederick & Lynn Sorrels
Kati Sowiak
Richard Speranza
Judith Stefani
Frank & Nancy Steigerwalt
Robin Sullivan
Robert Szwajkos
Nancy Terry
Robert & Sandra Thomas
Jack & Barb Thompson
James E. & Mary H. Thompson
Neale Messina & Susan Thompson
Janet Beasley & Brian Titus
Elizabeth & Gordon Todderud
Erika Toler
Richard & Ann Torbert
Colleen Touch
Phyllis E. Townsend
Douglas G. Turner
Richard Vitti
Robert & Peg Walker
Deborah Walter
David Walton
Robert S. Weiss
Barbara Welch
Carrie Wetherby
Steve & Carole Williams
Philip S. & Linda Winn
Cheryl Wishing
David & Elizabeth Wolcott
Linda Koezler Wolfenson
Rebecca Woodward
Richard & Dawn Wyatt
Sam & Linda Yosen
Gail Zagoreos

Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- Mary Dinneen, Realtor
- Edward Jones (Shikha Prashar)
- First National Bank & Trust Company of Newtown
- Fleck Family Holdings
- Gilded Home Furnishings Consignment
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- Lin Bethman Auto Center, Inc.
- Marcolla Realty
- Marisa Pilla Design
- Newtown Business Association
- Parry Insurance
- Anthony Petsis & Associates, Inc.
- SDG Holdings I, LLC
- Steele's Gulf Auto Repair, Inc.
- Stuckert and Yates
- T & T Tree Service
- Tomasello Appraisals & Advisory
- Waitkus Design

Interested in renewing your membership or becoming a member? If so, please visit

<https://www.newtownhistoric.org/renewal>

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.

