



# HISTORIA

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2003

## HATS ON... HATS OFF... TO POETRY! NTHS Annual Dinner Meeting and Election of Officers



NTHS member and poet, Dottie Glessner, will entertain us with selected readings from her new volume of poetry *CUTTINGS* (just published in May 2003). Calling herself a commentator and poet-taster, she will share 90 years of dubious wisdom, “verse or worse,” and snippets of humor and satire. You won't be bored!

All are urged to wear a hat to this meeting to celebrate poetry — be creative, and express yourself with the hat you wear. All members who arrive with “hats on” will automatically be entered in a drawing for an autographed copy of *CUTTINGS*.

The November 19th NTHS meeting is our annual DINNER gathering starting at 6:30 PM. The officers and directors of NTHS will provide the meat dishes. All are encouraged to join us for a fun evening. Visitors are welcome. Please bring a salad, a vegetable, or a dessert. Questions regarding the dinner may be directed to Pat Komelasky at 215-355-0649.

## VANHORN-CORNELL HOUSE LOST IN VILLAGE SHIRES

*By Michael Tomkins*

Roughly five years ago, my wife and I purchased a small tract of land in Northampton Township on which stood a house originally built around 1925. Being a historian by trade, I envisioned buying a more historic property, but could not swing a deal at the time. Being that the house was only 73-years old, I decided to determine who owned my property prior to my house being built. Mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century historic maps of the area showed that it was once part of a large farmstead owned, during this period, by the Cornell family. Comparing the historic map data with more recent maps led me to believe that the Cornells resided somewhere in the midst of what today is the community of Village Shires (West). I concluded that the residence must have been demolished during the development, which occurred in the 1980s. I drove around this section of the Village to look for any signs of the house, but was disappointed to find no evidence of its existence.



**Vanhorn-Cornell House in 1859.**  
Source: Hughes Farm Map of Northampton  
Township, 1859.

Story continues on page 3

## NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Dear Members:

As we approach our annual dinner meeting and election of officers, it has been a time for me to reflect on the past year. It has been a full one. Our membership has increased to approximately 154 members; we have enjoyed a variety of programs in our meetings; we participated in Northampton Days; we made it possible for young people to experience archaeology, and we enjoyed dinner together courtesy of Fred Holzwarth's bequest.

The Board of Directors has initiated a review of the Society's bylaws. We are currently revising and updating the bylaws and hope to have the revision ready to present to you at the March meeting.

The Board also felt the need to increase membership fees and introduce a new hierarchy, which you will find within this issue. There will be a membership mailing conducted in late November for 2004. Be sure to send in your membership dues/renewals immediately, and consider contributing at one of the new higher levels. Your help in recruiting new members is always appreciated.

Regretfully we had to cancel the Pearl Buck luncheon and tour that Pat Komelasky organized for October 19th. It later came to our attention that many members and friends were interested, but reservations and intent were not made by the deadline. In the future, I urge all interested members to heed advertised deadlines so that we can take advantage of interesting and enjoyable outings. A special thank you to Pat Komelasky for her time and efforts in planning this trip.

NTHS has received a Community Development Grant of \$5,000 from the state. The Board of Directors will be discussing how to use this money. If you have any ideas or recommendations, we would be delighted to hear them.

I hope all of you will plan to come and join us on November 19th for HATS OFF TO POETRY. My mother, Dottie Glessner, will entertain you — I guarantee it! Wear a creative or imaginative hat for the opportunity to have your name placed in a drawing for a free, autographed copy of Dottie's book, CUTTINGS. Bring a covered dish, and join us for dinner too!

Since this is the last meeting of 2003, I would like to wish all of you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. See you in March!

*Debbie Glessner*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NTHS Dinner Meeting**

**Dottie Glessner Poetry reading**  
**Wednesday November 19 - 6:30 PM**

**Fall Lecture Schedule:****DAVID LIBRARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

The David Library is pleased to announce the Fall Lecture Series, focusing on women and women's issues in the Revolutionary era.

**Thursday, November 20, 7:30 PM**

Lucia C. Stanton, Shannon Senior Research Fellow, Monticello  
*Marriage at Monticello: Three Enslaved Women Named Sally*  
 Ms. Stanton is the author of Slavery at Monticello and Free Some Day: The African American Families of Monticello.

**Sunday, December 7, 3:00 PM**

Dr. Elaine Crane, Professor of History, Fordham University  
*Bearing Witness: Neighbors and Family Violence in Early New England*. Dr. Crane is the author of Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change 1630-1800 and Diary of Elizabeth Drinker: Life Cycle of an Eighteenth-Century Woman.

David Library lectures are free and open to the public, but since seating is limited, you are encouraged to make reservations. Lectures take place in the Feinstone Conference Center, adjacent to the Library building, and are followed by a reception in the Rose Gallery. For reservations or additional information, please call (215) 493-6776, or e-mail [dlar@dlar.org](mailto:dlar@dlar.org).

**The Roads of Bucks County****Sunday, November 9****2-3:30 p.m., Spruance Library**

Local historian Lou Fleck presents a discussion of the roads and byways of Bucks County, and how they came to be. Using topographical maps, Fleck discusses how we evolved from using animal paths to highways, and how the geography of Bucks County provided natural routes for roads. Free with museum admission.

**The Historic Moland House****Monday, November 17****12:30 p.m., Mercer Museum Elkins Gallery**

Jackie Schneck will speak at the BCHS Friends Quarterly Program on the restoration of the Moland House in Warwick Township. The Moland House was George Washington's headquarters during a 13-day encampment in 1777 where the Marquis de Lafayette and Casimir Pulaski joined the American Revolution. Refreshments and short meeting precede the featured program. Free and open to the public.

**The Art of the Silhouette****Saturday, November 29**

11 a.m.-4 p.m., Mercer Museum Shop on the Canal, New Hope  
 Silhouette artist Blanche Turner will demonstrate the art of silhouette cutting and create individual portraits. Have a custom silhouette created for the perfect, personalized gift and family memento. For fee schedule and to make reservations for a sitting, call the Mercer Museum Shop on the Canal in New Hope at (215) 862-4216.

**VANHORN-CORNELL HOUSE, LOST IN VILLAGE SHIRES** from Page 1

About a year ago, I found time to conduct more research into the ownership history of my property and discovered that prior to the Cornells, the Vanhorn family had owned it. They acquired it in the early 1700s. I filed my research notes to be taken out at a later date, and that later date came in the summer of this year.

In early June, fellow historical society member, Betty Luff, brought to my attention that a house formerly owned by the Cornells, was for sale in Village Shires. Being a descendent of the Cornell family, Betty keeps a keen eye on the properties in the township associated with the family. She proceeded to tell me where the house was located, describing its location as being hidden on the outskirts of the Village off Potter Place. Could she be talking about the house that I had not been able to find four years earlier? I was certain it was gone. Indeed she was. I was obviously very excited to hear of its existence. It turns out that the place was partitioned off on its own four-acre lot, not to be developed as part of the Village Shires master plan. The problem I encountered during my earlier search for the house was that no formal drive had been created from the Village to the Vanhorn-Cornell House. It could not be seen from the development, due to the heavily wooded area surrounding it.

The following day, I ventured out again in search of the Vanhorn-Cornell House. After several wrong turns, I finally found the hidden drive leading to the place. It was there!!! Rundown, but indeed there. The place was in rough shape having tarps on the roof to help keep out the rain. With the exception of the dirt drive, which was filled with 15-foot wide puddles of unknown depth, the property was totally overgrown. Nevertheless, I was delighted to find the house. One look at it, and I knew it would take a special person to invest in this property.

About a month later, I was delighted to hear that the property had been sold and the new owners, Steve Ensinger and Kelly Callahan, were already busy restoring the place. By special appointment, we were graciously given a tour of the house and the grounds, which had been ferociously cleaned up. It was clear from their enthusiasm that they had a real passion towards the restoration of this grand house.

The house appears to have been built in three stages. The middle portion of the house is likely the oldest, and was probably built by Abraham Vanhorn during the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A date-stone, which may have been previously situated within the eave of this section of the house and removed prior to the subsequent additions, was discovered inside one of the property's historic outbuildings. The date-stone, which reads "AMVH 1730", was incorporated within the outbuilding's stone chimney. The two additions to the original structure are likely to have been constructed while the property was under the ownership of the Cornell family. The easternmost section (far right in the illustrations) may have been added by Adrian Cornell during the 1830s. The westernmost section (far left) of the house is believed to have been constructed during the 1840s, when the building was the residence of Henry S. Cornell. Henry was the son of Adrian Cornell and inherited the property upon the death of his father in 1841.

Upon leaving the property that day, along a freshly graveled driveway (having no puddles), I felt a sense of gratification knowing the house was in good hands. I would like to personally thank the new keepers of the Vanhorn-Cornell House for helping preserve one of Northampton's historic treasures. Thank you and best of luck to both of you.



**Vanhorn-Cornell House in 1974.**  
Source: *Winds of Change*, 1985.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

November 2004

Since we do not have a Nominating Committee, the NTHS Board of Directors presents this slate of officers for 2004. Because most officers are incumbents, we are not including profiles this year, except for Sylvia Amato, our new secretary.

**President:** Debbie Glessner  
**Vice President:** Mary Seader  
**Secretary:** Sylvia Amato  
**Treasurer:** Michael Tomkins  
**Director:** Douglas Crompton  
**Director:** Jean Gallagher  
**Director:** Betty Luff

**Secretary – Sylvia Amato**



Sylvia Amato is a “born and bred” Bucks Countian since she was raised in Lower Bucks County. She graduated from Penn State with a degree in secondary education with a dual major in English and History. She holds a Master’s Degree in Education. After marriage to a fellow teacher, Bucks County continued to be her home when she and her husband Carmen moved to Churchville in 1968.

Sylvia spent several years teaching in Centennial Schools before the births of her son and daughter. Later, she returned to teaching, this time in Council Rock School District where she spent twenty-five years at Richboro Junior/ Middle School as a teacher of English and Humanities. Retirement in 2001 has allowed her time to indulge her passions for reading, gardening, cooking, and needlecrafts, as well the ability to continue the restoration of their 18<sup>th</sup> century stone mill house.

Sylvia joined NTHS in the fall of 1998 where she enjoys the company of other old-house enthusiasts and preservationists. Having seen the march of “progress” through Northampton Township, she would like to work to retain the last vestiges of the character of the community and devote her time to civic responsibilities.

## NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Board of Directors voted upon and approved new membership fees as well as introducing a new hierarchy. The following will become effective immediately for 2004 renewals and new memberships.

**Individual** \$15.00  
**Senior Citizen** \$10.00  
**Student** \$10.00  
**Family** \$20.00  
**Sustaining** \$50.00  
 (replaces Extra Support for the Society)  
 NTHS mug

**Sponsor** \$100.00  
 Polo Shirt with NTHS logo

**Patron** \$250.00  
 5 year membership  
 Polo Shirt and mug OR Small Spread Eagle print

**NTHS Circle** \$500.00 and up  
 Life Membership in NTHS  
 Monthly recognition in the HISTORIA  
 Polo Shirt and mug  
 Large Spread Eagle print



The Churchville Post Office in the early 20th century.



# NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 732, RICHBORO, PENNSYLVANIA 18954-0732

[www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org)

## 2003 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

<b>President</b>	Debbie Glessner	215-357-2449	dglessner2@comcast.net	PA Relay 800-654-5988
<b>Vice President</b>	Mary Seader	215-355-4467	RJSTioga@cs.com	
<b>Secretary</b>	Sylvia Amato			
<b>Treasurer</b>	Michael Tomkins	215-504-1998	michaeltomkins@comcast.net	
<b>Membership</b>	Doug Crompton	215-355-5307	doug@crompton.com	
<b>Ways and Means</b>	Diane Amadio	215-355-6399	dianerealtor@enter.net	
<b>Social Committee</b>	Pat Komelasky	215-355-0649	gkomelasky@msn.com	
<b>Director (Past Pres.)</b>	Doug Crompton	215-355-5307	doug@crompton.com	
<b>Director</b>	Jean Gallagher	215-968-5222		
<b>Director</b>	Sydell Gross	215-322-5547		
<b>HISTORIA Editor</b>	Doug Crompton	215-355-5307	doug@crompton.com	

HISTORIA is published quarterly by the Northampton Township Historical Society. The Society meets four times each year at the Northampton Township Cultural Center, Upper Holland Road, Richboro. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. Meetings start at 7:30 PM with refreshments, general meeting, and a featured speaker. For more information visit our web page or email us at [nths@NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:nths@NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org) Past issues of the HISTORIA, in color, are available on our web page [www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.NorthamptonTownshipHistoricalSociety.org) The HISTORIA is edited by Doug Crompton. Articles are always welcome.

### Meeting Dates for 2003/2004

November 19, 2003	Dinner Meeting	6:30 PM
March 17, May 19, September 15	General Meeting	7:30 PM
November 17	Dinner Meeting	6:30 PM

### Board Meetings 2004

February 10, April 13  
 August 10, October 12  
 7 PM - Call for locations

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 2004 (January 2004 to December 2004)

INDIVIDUAL - \$15    SENIOR - \$10    STUDENT - \$10    SPONSOR - \$100    PATRON - \$250 (5 year membership)  
 FAMILY - \$20    SUSTAINING - \$50    NTHS CIRCLE - \$500 or greater (Life membership)

Note - Applications received after October 31 will be credited for the following year. This application is sent with all editions of the HISTORIA. Please check your mailing label for the expiration year. Normal renewal time is the first quarter of the year or when the March HISTORIA is received. If your membership is current, please pass this application on to others who may be interested in our society. Please consider a contribution of more than the minimum membership to help defray increasing society costs.

**Send to:**  
**Northampton Township Historical Society**  
**PO BOX 732**  
**Richboro, PA 18954-0732**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Classification \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DUES ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

May we count on you to serve on one of our committees ? :    Y \_\_\_\_\_    N \_\_\_\_\_    MAYBE \_\_\_\_\_

Please give us your ideas for speakers at future meetings : \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to write an article for the HISTORIA \_\_\_\_\_

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed : \_\_\_\_\_