



HISTORIA

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 2000

Historic RittenhouseTown

The birthplace of Paper in America

The March (April 5) Northampton Township Historical Society meeting will feature a talk on Historic RittenhouseTown, the birthplace of Paper making in America. RittenhouseTown is located along Monoshone creek in Fairmount Park. Once a thriving colonial village, which included over forty structures, it is now a United States Department of Interior National Historic Landmark.

RittenhouseTown was the site of the first paper mill in the thirteen colonies of Great Britain. Wilhelm Rittenhausen arrived in America from Holland in 1688 and, with his son, Nicholas, built a mill to manufacture fine white paper in 1690. This mill was William Penn's pride, since such facilities were new in England. For over one hundred years, this area remained a center of papermaking in America.

Today RittenhouseTown is a working museum. Visitors can tour the remaining seven buildings and grounds. Hand papermaking and Early American History and culture workshops are held throughout the year.

The talk will be given by Andrew Zellers-Frederick, Executive Director of RittenhouseTown. Andy has an extensive background in Historic Preservation and American History and he is the Chairman of the Warminster Township Historical Preservation Board, which meets at Craven Hall.

IN THIS ISSUE

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A GREAT HOUSE BELONGING TO A GREAT MAN

By Betty Luff

Every one knows or has read that Northampton Township's most prominent citizen was Judge Henry Wynkoop. Much has been written about his political life but not so much about the magnificent manor house his father, Nicholas, built in 1739 when Henry was but two years old. Henry spent his entire 80 years on this 200 acre homestead, bordered by Holland Road and Richboro-Newtown Road.

While most of the other Northampton farmers were still living in log houses in 1739, it is hard to imagine what an undertaking it must have been to find workmen to remove the great amount of stone from the fields and the lumber from the forests to construct such an estate.

The house has been described as one of the most magnificent country mansions in Pennsylvania and rivaled the best plantation houses of Virginia. Three full stories in height, 20 rooms, including the hidden one with the secret stairway, this secret chamber was not only used by political refugees but also until the Civil War by fugitives on the underground Railroad.

It is written that at the south entrance there were five solid stone steps, six feet in length and one foot high, the top step being a great flat stone slab, six feet by five feet by one foot on which guests stood while pulling the brass knocker to announce their arrival. Guests were greeted at night by candles on stone candle stands at the front steps.

Inside were two great double parlors, each 20x30 feet, with large open fireplaces at opposite ends. Behind the East parlor was a music room, west of it was the long dining room with its curved fireplaces and numerous cupboards for china, glass and other accessories. On the west was a small buttry, having cellar stairs and joined by a door to the great kitchen which had a huge open fireplace, with many cranes and a large spit.

Pictures, Page 3, Story continues page 4

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Glorious Spring is here – my favorite time of year. I love the scent of grass after the rain, washing windows, hanging out the clothes, and watching everything burst forth.

On Saturday, March 18th we had an invigorating clean up at the Spread Eagle. Weeds were pulled, boards painted, and flowers planted.- a new beginning for the “Grand Old Lady” of Second Street Pike.

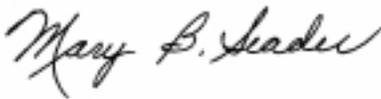
Because our meeting date had to be changed I won't be able to attend on April 5th. My youngest daughter, Elizabeth will help with the refreshments and cleanup.

Margaret Hull and I drove past Historic RittenhouseTown recently and it looked so interesting – old stone buildings, a little hamlet, where time stood still. This is where the first paper mill in America was started, right here in Philadelphia.

Since I cannot be with you all at the meeting and presentation on RittenhouseTown by Andy, I plan on visiting the site upon my return and I will be glad to bring some folks with me to see it in person.

A reminder that it is time to renew your Historical Society membership. On the last page of this and every HISTORIA is a membership application. Please fill it out and bring it to the next meeting or mail it to us. Thank you for your support!

Looking forward to seeing you all in May. Have a blessed Spring.



SPREAD EAGLE CLEANUP

About 25 community members, including State Representative Roy Reinard, Northampton Township officials, Historical Society members and Council Rock school students pitched in to improve the look of the Spread Eagle Inn in Richboro Saturday morning March 18th. Shovels, rakes, ladders, paint, donated plants and hard work on the part of the volunteers helped restore what was once a beautiful corner in the township. The cleanup was organized by Courtney Yelle, Holland and Doug Crompton, Richboro, as part of an ongoing effort to save the inn from the wrecking ball. More cleanup days will be scheduled as needed.

SEE PICTURES ON PAGE 6

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bryn Athyn's Architecture

The Town, Cathedral and Cairnwood
Saturday, April 1
Bucks County Community College
215-968-8268

Arts and Antiques Seminar Series

April 7 - Kristina Haugland - Next to Skin: A Brief History of Woman's Underwear
April 14 - Ella B. Schaap - Dutch Delftware and Ceramic Tiles
April 21 - Glenn Tomlinson - Maxfield Parrish and the Golden Age of Illustration
Planned Parenthood of Bucks County
215-968-1632 215-493-8533

Northampton Township Historical Society

April 5, 2000 - 7:30 PM
General Meeting - Historic RittenhouseTown

Fifth Annual Old House Expo and Restoration Exposition

Saturday April 8 - 10 AM - 5 PM
New-Hope Solebury High School
215-348-9461 Ext.10

Historical Society of Southampton

April 17, 2000 - 7:30 PM
Lower Southampton Library
215-357-2086

Bucks County Genealogical Society

Annual Conference April 29, 2000
Lenape Middle School
215-230-9410
bucksgenpa@erols.com

The David Library

April 27 - Karen Huetter, “Moravian Culture on the colonial Frontier”
May 18 - Prof. Andrew)’Shaughnessy, “An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean”
June 8 - Prof. Stuart Leibiger, “Founding Friendship: George Washington, James Madison and the Creation of the American Republic”

Craven Hall Historical Society

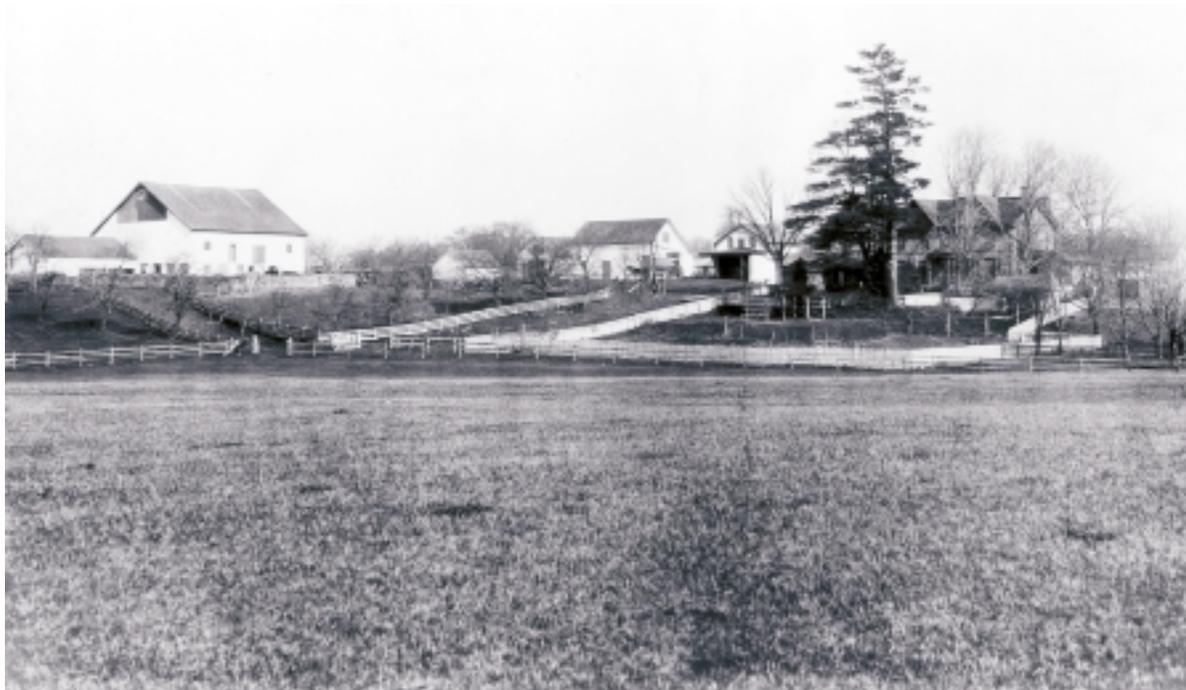
May Faire 2000 May 6 - 9AM - 5 PM, May 7 - 10 AM - 5 PM
Craven Hall grounds, Street and Newtown Roads,
Warminster 215-675-4698

27th Annual Folk Festival

Mercer Museum, Doylestown
May 13/14 2000
215-345-0210 www.libertynet.org/bchs

Historical Society of Southampton

May 15, 2000 - 7:30 PM
Lower Southampton Library
215-357-2086



“Vredens Hof”, built in 1739 by Nicholas Wynkoop. Destroyed by fire in 1914. Barn destroyed by lightning September 1916. Located on East side of Holland Road near Newtown-Richboro Road. Picture circa 1900.



Front view of Wynkoop Mansion, built 1739. Picture circa 1900 after much deterioration.

A Great House from Page 1

On the second floor were many bedrooms, each with its individual open fireplace, as each of the four stone chimneys had an opening, on either side on all three floors. One end of the third floor was used for a store room and the other was a great ball room or meeting place, with heat from the fireplaces.

To the east of the mansion was a two-story stone servants quarters, containing eight rooms. Just south of it was a stone smoke house, a wash house, a two story milk house, paved at different levels to form shelves for keeping milk and other edibles cold. There were huge stone stables, barns, wagon houses and even a blacksmith shop and forge where Nicholas Wynkoop repaired his own farming tools.

All of these buildings stood on a 20 foot bluff, with a commanding view of the whole Holland Valley and even the north slope of Langhorne Hill.

“Vredens-Hof” which in Dutch meant “The abode of peaceful rest” was completely destroyed by fire of an unknown origin in 1911. Some say a tenant, living in the house while the owners were away, was drying clothes before one of the great fireplaces. The barn was destroyed by fire during the disastrous thunder storm of Sept. 8, 1916, with many other barns in the vicinity burning at the same time, including the one of Charles Luff, a mile to the West.

For many, many years all that remained at the site of the Wynkoop mansion were large piles of rubble consisting mostly of stone which was overgrown with wild blackberries which the locals all knew were delicious. When the Morrisey family built their home on the same bluff in 1972, some of the stone was used for its foundation.

Later when the Fluehr’s built their home on the corner of the property in 1976, the stone from the little house that Judge Wynkoop was born in 230 years before, was used for it’s foundation.

Community mourns the loss of Ralph Samuels, former Living Tree Award recipient

Ralph Samuels died Wednesday February 16, 2000 at the age of 84. Ralph was a writer, labor organizer, war hero, dairy farmer, politician and newspaper publisher. He and his wife Louise resided in the county since 1947 and devoted much of their time to public service. The Northampton Township Historical Society honored him in 1986 with the Living Tree Award. The award is given in recognition of outstanding dedication and service to the community of Northampton Township.

Spread Eagle Update

Doug Crompton

Many things have happened since our last meeting in November regarding the Spread Eagle Inn. In December there was a public meeting at which I spoke in favor of saving the Inn. Others that spoke at that meeting favored saving the Inn and there were no dissenters. At that time the supervisors were receptive of our thoughts but skeptical about saving the inn. At about the same time Amoco made it known to the township that they no longer had any interest in building a gas station on the site. The township quickly moved to condemn the site. At present, after an appeal period, the township is the owner of the inn and grounds but a fair market value, which the township will have to pay, has not been established. Amoco paid \$490,000 for it three years ago.

We started a massive campaign in January to both call and send letters to the supervisors asking that the inn be saved. The public response has been very good. In late February the Historical Society sponsored a meeting at the Senior Center aimed at setting up a committee to “Save the Spread Eagle.” Three supervisors attended that meeting and the discussion was positive. A plan to have cleanup days at the Spread was discussed. The first one is scheduled for March 18. Those interested in serving on the committee were asked to sign a sheet.

At about the same time Richard Welch, a developer who grew up in Northampton, contacted me. Some of you will remember him as he and his brother recently lobbied successfully to have the new elementary school named after their mother, Maureen Welch, in return for a payment of \$500,000 to the Council Rock School district. I met with Rich and his brother at their office in Doylestown and presented photographs and history of the Spread Eagle. They took me on a tour of the Fountain House across the street from their office. It is strikingly similar to the Spread Eagle and is now a Star Bucks Coffee house on the first floor, professional offices on the second, and apartments on the third. They did an outstanding job of restoring the structure and received awards for their work. If you are in the Doylestown area, State and Main Streets, stop and take a look at how the Spread Eagle could look!

The Welch’s are very interested in the Spread Eagle property and will present a preliminary plan to the Northampton Supervisors in Mid March. Their proposal for building use would be similar to the Doylestown site.

While all of this sounds very positive we are not out of the woods yet! This plan depends on the Spread Eagle staying at its current location and the route 232/332-intersection improvements being made around it. A feasibility study is underway regarding that. We should have a good idea what direction we are going in by late April to May.

Your letters and call to the supervisors are still important!! This is a pivotal time and they need to know how you feel!!

PICTURES ON PAGE 6

Bucks' Lida Walton dies at age 110

The longtime area resident lived in three centuries. After years of working a Warminster farm with her husband, she spent her retirement traveling the globe.

By HARRY YANOSHAK *Staff Writer*

DOYLESTOWN TWP - Lida Walton's life was as rich as first-class champagne sipped from the finest flute and enjoyed among the closest friends.

Walton died Wednesday at Pine Run Health Center after having lived in Bucks County for 110 years. A relative said she died from natural causes.

A farmer's daughter born at a time when the county's riches fed a growing Philadelphia, she observed life in three centuries and eras: the Gilded Age of the 19th century, the tumultuous 20th century and the onset of the new millennium. Born when Benjamin Harrison was president, she lived through the terms of 18 more U.S. leaders.

She was born Lida Cornell in the Holland section of Northampton on Nov. 15, 1889, four days after Washington was admitted to the union as the 42nd state. Her parents, Anna Leedom Carter Cornell and Elmer Cornell, operated a farm on Holland Road that was immortalized in an 1848 painting by Edward Hicks that now hangs in the National Gallery in Washington. Her mother's house still stands on Lower Holland Road in Northampton.

In 1910, the year the U.S. Census recorded a population of 92 million, Lida Cornell married Albert Walton, and soon thereafter the couple operated and later owned Walton's father's farm at Mearns and Ivyland roads in Warminster, just outside Ivyland Borough.

It was Lida Walton's job to handle the farm's finances and prepare the harvest for markets in Philadelphia. For 47 years, she maintained her ties to the land and did her best to harness its riches despite the strain of two world wars and the Great Depression.

During the 1930s, the 40-something, married mother volunteered her services as a "gray lady" at Abington Memorial Hospital. A memory of that period was the time she watched march king John Phillip Sousa perform at nearby Willow Grove Park.

She and her husband raised four children. Two children, Priscilla Hunt of Hopewell, N.J., and Charles Walton of Jenkintown, died in 1996 and 1998, respectively. Sons William Walton, 86, of Lynchburg, Va., and John Walton, 81, of Rydal, survive.

Lida Walton had five grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and six great-great grandchildren.



"She always said that ill health comes from not eating your vegetables," granddaughter Lynn Curtis said during Mrs. Walton's last birthday celebration, which was held in November at Pine Run Center in Doylestown Township.

Sam Hunt of Yardley, Mrs. Walton's 58-year-old grandson, recalled those days on the farm and watching his grandmother milk a cow or churn butter.

Hunt said when the work was done, "granny" took off her overalls and dressed like a lady.

"To the nines," Hunt said. "She would always have her white gloves and wear a hat."

She sold the farm in 1958, and soon after her husband died.

She moved to Doylestown and while in her late 60s remade herself into a world traveler, visiting three continents with trips to Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. She kept a camera at arm's reach, capturing scenes from Vietnam, the TransSiberian Railway, Nepal and Tibet. She continued traveling well into her 90s.

"She traveled first class all the way," Hunt said, noting his grandmother was a superb money manager who knew how to live well and who never gave up her independence. She was the chief of her family, making her own decisions without outside help, Hunt said.

When she wasn't trekking around the globe, Mrs. Walton was active in Bucks County's Historical Society, where she served a stint as the society's president, and in the Doylestown Garden Club.

She moved to Doylestown's Center Square Towers high-rise before deciding 12 years ago to move into Pine Run Health Center, a nursing home outside Doylestown Borough. While a resident there, she maintained her mental sharpness and a positive attitude as well as a diet rich in vegetables and a lifestyle that included a daily nap. On her birthday, she sipped champagne.

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the Intelligencer Record
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**TIME TO RENEW YOUR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP!**



**The Fountain House, Doylestown
Architecture very similar to the Spread Eagle Inn**



**Cleanup at the Spread Eagle Inn, March 18
Supervisor, Peter Palestina loads trash bags while
volunteers cleanup the grounds**



**Volunteers work to spruce up the Spread Eagle Inn
A trash dumpster was donated by
Leck Rubbish Removal**



**State Representative Roy
Reinard on paint detail**



**Gardens in front were
planted with Pansies**



**Jim Burttt sweeps the walk as Rep. Roy Reinard
paints the boards on windows and doors**



**Peter Palestina, Lydia Sakaitis, Sydell Gross and
George Komelasky pose during cleanup**



NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 732, RICHBORO, PENNSYLVANIA

WEBSITE: <http://www.crompton.com/bucks> EMAIL: nths@crompton.com

2000 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President	Mary Seader	355-4467
Vice President	Vacant	
Secretary	Janet O'Neill	355-2107
Treasurer	William Smith	357-8831
Membership	Fred Holzwarth	357-4899
Ways and Means	Diane Amadio	355-6399
Social Committee	Doris D'Ardenne	968-5507
Director (Past Pres.)	Doug Crompton	355-5307
Director	Jean Gallagher	357-7833
Director	Sydell Gross	322-5547
HISTORIA Editor	Doug Crompton	355-5307
Send articles to:	1269 2nd St Pike Richboro, PA 18954	

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. Past issues of the HISTORIA are available at our web page.

Meeting Dates for 2000

April 5, 2000	General Meeting	7:30 PM
May 24, 2000	General Meeting	7:30 PM
Sept 22, 2000	General Meeting	7:30 PM
Nov 15, 2000	Dinner Meeting	6:30 PM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL CLASSIFICATIONS

PATRON:	Extra support for the society	\$35.00
FAMILY:	All members of one family	\$15.00
SINGLE:	Adult individual membership	\$10.00
SENIOR CITIZEN:	Age 65 years or older	\$5.00

This will be your membership for the calendar year of 2000 (January 2000 to December 2000)

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 in 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: _____ SINGLE: FAMILY:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ DUES ENCLOSED: \$ _____

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 : _____