



HTHS



610-446-7988

HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 2002

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 17, 2001
Llanerch Presbyterian Church
Lansdowne and Park Avenues
Havertown, PA
8:00 PM

Topic: Dolls Mirror Our Past
Guest Speaker: Anita Intenzo

Ms. Intenzo collects, appraises, and restores paintings, photographs, and antique dolls. She will appraise the Society's doll collection and tell us how a doll can be a time capsule using a pre-Civil War doll in her collection. After her talk, Ms. Intenzo will be available for informal appraisals of member's dolls.

Light refreshments will follow the meeting.

Restored Stairway Dedicated

Over the decades, visitors to Nitre Hall, home of the powder master of Nitre Hall Mills, had grown accustomed to the "door to nowhere." The c.1810 building seemed to float above the Cobbs Creek, source of waterpower to the valley and its mills. Now Nitre Hall is anchored to its plateau by the recently rebuilt stairs. Project architect, Daniel T. Campbell, A.I.A., of John Milner Architects, Inc. based his design on physical evidence uncovered during stucco replacement in 2000 and on photographs and etchings of the Lower Merion Academy (1812), which may be a "sister" building. In addition, the bridge connecting the stone ramp-wall to the west side of Nitre Hall was rebuilt to Campbell's specifications.

Thanks to the fine craftsmen of County Line Construction, electricians William J. Bradley and Sons, and Nolan Painting, students in the Colonial Living Program this fall will see the entrance to the home the way guests, trades people, and servants did during the 1800's. Photographs of some work in progress, including one of Bud Razor and son opening the original joist pockets, are on the Society web site: www.delcohistory.org/hths. This restoration was made possible through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

New Titles in the HTHS Library

- ◆ *Log Cabins of New Sweden* by George Ambrose
- ◆ *The Storm Gathering – The Penn Family and the American Revolution* by Lorette Treese
- ◆ *St. Denis Parish, A Community Built on Faith and Tradition 1825 - 2000*, gift of member Lorayne Currie.

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On Sunday, June 2, 2002, former State Senator Richard Tilghman and HTHS president Mary Courtney cut the ribbon for the recently completed stairs on the east façade of Nitre Hall. Lending their support are (left to right) Commissioners Ken Richardson, Rob Trumbull, and Jim McGarrity. State Senator Connie Williams also joined Society members for the ceremony and reception.

Local Wonders

This summer's exhibit at Nitre Hall combined sketches and watercolors of Haverford artists Rose Kirkpatrick, Reida Loder and Wilmer Richter with the architectural projects of the Haverford Township School District's fourth-grade Seminar students. The students spent the first half of Seminar learning how communities develop and striving to understand man-made versus natural environments. They investigated the role architecture plays in history and in our everyday lives and studied the science of building structures.

Beginning in March, students chose, researched, and visited a local historical site – a local wonder. Some students produced posters or models on their chosen building, such as the c.1840 Main Line Arts Center, home of Denis Kelly's daughter, Ann Margaret Kelly Martin; the 1797 Federal School; Lawrence Cabin; Nitre Hall, with its new stairs; and Narberth, the birthplace of Dr. George Smith. Others penned creatively-imagined diaries of long-ago owners of Pont Reading and the Frog Tavern. We hope to display other Seminar projects for many summers to come. 🍂

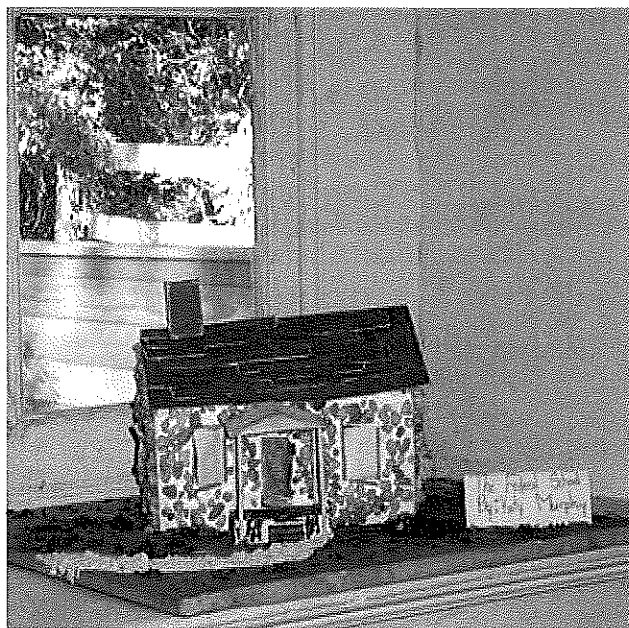
Progress at Nitre Hall

Two years ago in August of 2000, the board of directors met to set specific goals. Several of these have been met. In addition to the major stair project at Nitre Hall, more appropriate exterior lighting has been installed around the building.

The Thomas Sully painting of Mary Siddons Whelan, wife of the owner of Nitre Hall, Israel Whelan, now hangs over the mantle in the parlor. This print was made with permission from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, home of the original oil painting. Storage areas in Nitre Hall are greatly improved, with most of our textile collection in acid-free boxes. Our "gift shop" is almost a reality and our office records are in better research-friendly shape.

Have you noticed that the picnic tables remain at Nitre Hall and the Cabin all year now, thanks to the Township? The site makes a delightful three-season picnic venue, even when the buildings are not open.

In addition to these accomplishments, librarians and other researchers will be happy to hear that the library at Nitre Hall will soon have catalog numbers, making it possible locate research materials more easily. 🍂



A model of the historic Federal School was created by Katy Murphy, a 2002 participant in the Fourth-grade Seminar.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Colonial Living Program
September 23 through October 23
- Harvest Festival – Massey House
Saturday, September 28 10 AM-5PM
- Haverford Township Day
Saturday, October 5
- HTHS General Membership Meeting
Thursday, October 17. 8PM
- Cabin Crafts Day – Swedish Cabin
Saturday, October 19. 10AM-4PM
- Board Meeting at Nitre Hall
Thursday, November 21. 7:30PM
- Holiday Teas at Nitre Hall
Sundays, December 8 & 15. 1-4PM
- General Membership Meeting: Daniel T. Campbell,
Architect for Nitre Hall Stairs Restoration
Thursday, February 20, 2003 8PM
- Annual Meeting: Claire Stratton on The Baby Hospital
Thursday, April 17, 2003 8PM

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THESE
EVENTS. PLEASE CALL 610-789-5169 TO
SIGN UP.**

A Family of Volunteers

Meet the Wolfes

Dedicated and loyal volunteers make the Haverford Township Historical Society an effective organization capable of award-winning accomplishments. Many thanks go out to those members who help by serving on the board of directors, hosting at open house events, working at Colonial Living, gardening, editing the newsletter, decorating at the holidays, and donating firewood or refreshments. In addition to all of this help from individuals, there is one entire family that is unique. All five members of the Wolfe family – Jeff, Amy, Sarah, Carolyn and Travis volunteer and have made lasting contributions to our sites and programs and in our hearts.

Jeff's carpentry skill can be seen in the strong peg system on the first floor of Nitre Hall. The straight-forward design makes it possible to display many tools and household implements of by-gone days, creating an educational experience out of an otherwise blank wall. His plaster and paint work in the north-side attic room, while not on the public tour and only seen by a few of us, created a clean and safe environment for much of our costume and textile collection. He even bravely tested the strength of the Cabin crane by gamely swinging on it. It held! Knowing the crane's strength means we can hang the heavy cooking kettle directly under the chimney opening and build our cooking fire there well back into the hearth. We hope this will make life in the cabin much less smokey.

Since 1997, Amy has interpreted a Welsh Friend for the Colonial Living Experience and she becomes a favorite teacher in the One-Room School House Day each spring. You've also seen her and first-born daughter Sarah in costume at various open house events. Daughter Carolyn, now a tenth grade student, spent the afternoon of June 2 guiding visitors to the Lawrence Cabin. Both Carolyn and her brother Travis have cooked, carried water, sawed wood, and made candles as colonial farm children. Travis helped out this year in the classroom at the Federal School on a day off from his own school, St. Pius X in Broomall. Last year Sarah, under the supervision of society curator Carol Joseph, organized twenty-five helpers to catalogue and pack for storage in acid-free tissue and boxes much of the society's vintage clothing collection, winning the Girl Scout Gold Award for her project.

The Wolfe family certainly is a family that volunteers together. Thank you.

A Great Website

The Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission lists events and articles of interest to history buffs. Now you can get a free subscription online at www.phmc.state.pa.us. Your address will never be sold or trad

Gifts to the Society

The Society gratefully received the following gifts in 2002 from generous benefactors.

The Papers and photographs of Dr. Blair Daniels, former principal of Chestnutwold School, were donated to HTHS by his nephew Leon Jordan of North Carolina

Seven albums of the late Commissioner and Haverford Township Democratic Chairman, Wilton A. Bunce, including newspaper clippings and photographs pertaining to the history of Haverford Township were presented to the Society by his wife Frances.

The Llanerch Woman's Club, which is disbanding after 85 years, named the HTHS as a beneficiary of their treasury. In addition, the records of the club will soon be added to the Historical Society's archives. Thank you President Diane Hagan and Llanerch club members. ❁

Welcome New Members

Jay C. Buckwalter
Frances Bunce
Bonita Sue Cochard
Kate deRiel
Robert L. DeSilets, Sr.
John and Sofia DiTrolio
David and Sharon Donnelly
Anne Hodgson
Marilyn Jolles Melman
Joyce E. Miller
William and Susan Mingey
Georgina Murphy
Steven and Elizabeth Phillips
Linda Povey
Stacy Rupp
Senator Connie Williams
Jeffrey and Amy Wolfe
John and Patricia Woodman

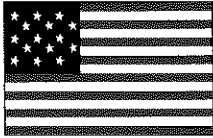
A supplement to the 2001-2003 Membership Directory will be available to members at the October meeting.



Nitre Hall Powder Magazine

By Dick Walker

As the Route 100 rail cars ride from Penfield to Beechwood-Brookline Stations in Powder Mill Valley, they pass two historic buildings, all that remain of the Nitre Hall Powder Mills built shortly after 1800. One building is Nitre Hall, owned by Haverford Township. The other building, now owned by SEPTA, was once the Nitre Hall powder magazine in use until about 1840. It was a strongly built stone building with a slate roof.



The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission lists it as an historic resource. During the night that Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the words to the *Star Spangled Banner*, Nitre Hall Mills was making gunpowder around the clock for the U.S. War Department.

Haverford Township Historical Society
P. O. Box 825
Havertown, PA 19083

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

When the Philadelphia and Western Railroad purchased the powder magazine for the right of way, they removed part of the building to make way for the track. They were thoughtful enough to leave the rest of the building standing, but at present, the ruin is unstable and endangered.

The Historical Society envisions a path to provide access for visitors to approach the powder magazine, from Karakung Drive rather than from SEPTA property. The Society is hopeful that work can be done to save this building so that future visitors to Nitre Hall will be able to get a closer look at the old powder magazine. ❁

In Memoriam

- ◆ Rosemary Kanavy, long-time member and avid supporter of our Appraisal Days - May 2, 2002
- ◆ Peter Longworth, beloved Manoa Elementary School fifth-grade teacher and tenant at Nitre Hall - May 19, 2002