



The Haverford Herald

Spring 2019

Our 80th Year

www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org



POWDER MILL VALLEY THIS PAST WINTER

Thanks to Will Belcher for providing us with this enchanting view of historic Powder Mill Valley under a light cover of fresh snow.

From the bottom to the top of this photo, one can see Cobb's Creek, Karakung Drive, Nitre Hall and Lawrence Cabin, and the Norristown High Speed Line (ex-Philadelphia and Western Ry).

Haverford Township Historical Society

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING & SPRING SPEAKER

— by Terri Dougherty

The spring HTHS general membership meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10th at the Haverford Township Free Library at 7pm. Once again we are partnering with the library for this program. Our guest speaker is Robyn Young. Robyn has written a book entitled Women in Penn's Woods: A History of Women in Pennsylvania. The book speaks of notable Pennsylvania women. Robyn has spent many years researching these women and has worked to have the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission approve and install 14 roadside markers to honor such women as Margaret Mead and Mary Cassatt. Please join us for a very interesting presentation. Light refreshments will be served. Feel free to share this event on social media.

Historical Society members should plan to arrive promptly, by 7pm, for our very brief Annual Meeting, during which board member elections will be held.



13TH ANNUAL HERITAGE FESTIVAL COMING JUNE 2ND — by John Kirkland

The 13th Annual Heritage Festival returns to Karakung Drive along beautiful Cobb's Creek in Haverford Township on Sunday, June 2 from 11am to 4pm. Over 3,000 Township residents are expected to attend. Presented as a fundraiser by the non-profit Haverford Township Historical Society, monies raised will go to support the restoration of the Colonial Kitchen in Nitre Hall.

This popular event continues the tradition of celebrating local history and culture with families and friends of all ages. The Festival features living history exhibits, live music and dancing, delicious food and a beer garden. Truly a community event, the Heritage Festival is proud to host many of Haverford Township's local non-profits and community organizations. The 13th Annual Festival's theme will celebrate the "Mills of Haverford Township." Check out our website for more information!



Haverford Township
Historical Society

NITRE HALL OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Open houses with free docent-led tours of Nitre Hall are scheduled for the following Sundays from 10am to 1 pm: June 30, July 28, August 25 and September 29. Note that Karakung Drive will not be closed to traffic on Sundays this year, due to roadwork on Manoa Road, except for the Heritage Festival on June 2, when Nitre Hall will also be open.

HTHS ACQUIRES MAJOR NEWSPAPER COLLECTION — by Richard Kerr

HTHS now can claim to hold an extensive and unique local newspaper collection. We did have a few dozen old newspapers, but we have recently taken possession of about 1,900 issues of Haverford-related papers that cover about 40 years of our local township history.

We were contacted by the Delaware County Historical Society about whether we wanted some newspapers. Richard Kerr went down to DCHS on November 24th to see exactly what was involved. It turned out that they had taken delivery of a large archive, containing a number of local weekly newspaper titles, from the Delaware County News Network publishing group, which wanted to dispose of its accumulated publishers' archives. DCHS is keeping the subject-organized newsclip files and county-wide materials, but has been contacting local historical societies about the various sub-county local papers. They felt that each title best belonged with the appropriate local history group.

With a lot of digging and searching, Rich was actually able to find, load and remove that day the sets of local newspapers relevant to Haverford Township. These include issues of the "West Chester Pike Leader" (1932), the "Havertown Leader" (1970-1983) and the "Haverford Press" (1985-2008). This collection is now safely tucked away in Nitre Hall. Rich has created summary lists of exactly what issues of each title we now have. He also gathered and went through the newspapers that we already owned and made a list of those, too.

The end result is that we have a substantial, inventoried newspaper collection full of township history tidbits. This is a treasure trove and a major addition to our historical holdings. The first steps, getting the newspapers from DCHS to Nitre Hall and inventorying them, are now both completed. Specialized archival boxes made for storing newspapers have been bought by HTHS, and donated metal shelving is now being gathered and assembled in the Map Room to store this collection. We then hope to find a way to digitally scan the newspaper issues in a searchable format, to make them widely and easily usable. As a related side effort, Rich researched and drafted a brief history of Haverford Township's local newspapers, which were largely undocumented.



History in Action –

A dozen moving boxes worth of old Haverford Township local newspapers, ready to depart the Delaware County Historical Society in Chester on November 24, 2018.

– R. Kerr photo

WOOD LEA SANITARIUM IN HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP — by Irene Coffey

A recent inquiry to HTHS led to the discovery of a private sanitarium in Haverford Township (land on northeast corner of Ardmore Avenue and Darby Road) that was previously unknown to us. Interestingly, the question came from a woman who now lives in Provence, France. The inquirer's aunt had worked as a nurse at the sanitarium in the 1920s and 1930s.

According to The Institutional Care of the Insane in the United States and Canada, edited by Henry M. Hurd in 1916:

"Wood Lea Sanitarium was organized September 1, 1908, by Dr. Grace E. White, for ten years assistant resident physician at the Friends' Asylum, Frankford, in partnership with Mrs. Elizabeth Chase McDaniel. In September, 1911, this partnership, by mutual consent and in accordance with an agreement entered into at the time of its formation, was dissolved and a new one formed, Dr. White remaining physician-in-charge and Elmer C. Rouband becoming business manager.

"The sanitarium is located at 300 Ardmore Avenue, Ardmore, Pa. It is surrounded by 30 acres of land, six of which are mature woodland, through which a small brook runs, adding to the picturesqueness of the grounds. Part consists of lawn and garden, part is under cultivation as an extensive kitchen garden, and part is under pasture.

"The house, a pleasant dwelling house of the old English style of architecture, is situated on a slight knoll, so that drainage and ventilation are satisfactory. It has accommodations for 10 patients. A stable is comprised in the group of buildings, and also an extensive chicken run. On the ground floor of the house, opening west and south, is a large assembly room, and connected with it is an indoor conservatory. Here the patients who are well enough to mingle with each other meet for entertainment and employment. A grand piano and victrola give opportunity for music; a well-selected library affords facilities for reading.

"Every effort is made to assist the patient to develop her resources for entertainment or by diversified occupation to enlarge them. Knitting, crocheting, basket-making, embroidery, dressmaking, indoor gardening, cards and other games have been found available, while in summer, tennis, croquet, outdoor gardening, walks and tramps over the surrounding country furnish entertainment.

"The special feature of the treatment method in use is the noninstitutional and truly homelike atmosphere provided for the patients, and the consistent and insistent appeal to the normality that is in each patient. The theory of the physician-in-charge is that nervous patients and those of abnormal mentality improve most rapidly in an environment where all that accentuates the deviation from the normal is minimized as far as possible, and where the regime approaches as nearly as possible to normal living. Such a course is made possible only by constant, direct association of the physician-in-charge with the patients, the intelligent and active cooperation of the attendant nurses, and the comparatively small number of patients."

We don't know how long the sanitarium remained in existence. It doesn't appear in the 1940 U.S. Census. However, based on the 1910-1930 Census records the facility maintained an impressive patient/nurse ratio. In 1910 there were 2 "boarders" and 3 nurses; in 1920 5 "boarders" and 7 nurses; and in 1930 9 "inmates" and 8 nurses.

Our French inquirer also found a newspaper article from September 14 (no year given) reporting that a patient, Sarah Sentman, was found dead in a water-filled bathtub. The cause of death – drowning or a heart attack – was not known. Further, the inquirer reports that her great-grandmother had a nervous breakdown after ironing too many shirts!

Should you wish to know if your grandmother also ironed too many shirts, necessitating a stay at Wood Lea, or to look at the Census records and other information, they are available at the Historical Society's Nitre Hall headquarters.

COUNTY-WIDE NEWS AND NOTES — by Kate Clifford

Want to know what's happening historically around Delaware County?

The Delaware County Historic Preservation Network (DCHPN) is a group of historical organizations around the county that has a listserv and a website to keep in touch with other organizations and individuals. We also have three meetings a year on various topics regarding how to run the organizations better. Last year we had a talk in Haverford Township, where members of the township's Historical Commission and a township commissioner spoke about the creation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in Haverford Township. In addition, we had a talk at the Newlin Grist Mill about how to start a volunteer program. This year our topics are on Grants, Creative Interpretation of Museum Displays, and Economic/ Environmental Feasibility of Historic Preservation. The dates and locations will be announced soon. In addition to these talks and information which helps your Haverford Township Historical Society provide the best experience they can, there is a list of historic events happening all over the area on the DCHPN website. I encourage you to check out the website, attend these events, and spread the word to your friends and family. Just go to <https://delcohpn.wixsite.com/dchpn> to check it out.

Year of the Mill

2019 has been designated as the Year of the Mill for Delaware County, and there are events happening all over the place to celebrate it. The County-wide display will be at the Newlin Grist Mill in Glen Mills. The display will open on May 4th at 12pm and will have maps, photos and artifacts from mills all around the county. The Newlin Grist Mill is also having many events and talks throughout the year on mills, including using their new waterwheel that they built on site. The Eastern Coalition of Historic Organizations (ECHO), which includes Haverford Township, will be having a tour on June 8 led by Kelly Brennan on the mills of upper Darby Creek and Cobb's Creek. In September, there will be a tour and talks about the mills on Chester Creek, and in October there will be a talk about the lower Darby Creek and Cobb's Creek mills. Many historic sites around the county will be changing their displays to show off mills in their area, including Nitre Hall. Come inside during the Heritage Festival and at open houses throughout the summer to see the new display. The Heritage Festival theme this year is mills, and mills will be featured on our new pint glasses, t-shirts and other areas throughout the day. Come out and celebrate your town's heritage and learn why Nitre Hall exists. More information about these events is at <https://delcohpn.wixsite.com/dchpn/year-of-mills-2019> and will be regularly updated so keep checking back.

Heritage Commission Preservation Awards

Every year, the Delaware County Heritage Commission presents awards recognizing projects and individuals throughout the county that promote heritage and historic preservation. The awards are presented at a May Delaware County Council meeting. If you know of an historic building that was recently restored, adaptively reused or preserved in the past year, please think about submitting a nomination for next year's awards. The nomination forms go out in December to all historical organizations and municipalities, and they are available on the Heritage Commission website. This year there are three Haverford Township projects nominated. If you would like to learn more, and see past award winners, just go to the website- <https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/programsandinitiatives/HeritageCommission/whatwedo.html>

WE WANT TO THANK YOU

The Haverford Township Historical Society heartily thanks everyone who has joined or renewed memberships for 2019. We are also very indebted to those people and organizations that have made donations, whether cash, in-kind services, artifacts or other materials. You make our work possible and worthwhile at the same time. As a small non-profit organization, we truly are, as our e-mail sign-off states, "Powered by Members, Contributors and Volunteers." This year marks our 80th anniversary (1939-2019) of serving the public.

ANNIE L. LOWRY MEMORIAL WATER TROUGH — by Richard Kerr

When increased traffic and road widening threatened the existence of an old water trough where Glendale Road meets Burmont Road, the Haverford Township Historical Society wrote to its owner, the Women's S. P. C. A. of Pennsylvania, which conveyed ownership of the trough to the historical society for preservation. At that time it was believed to have been the last public water trough to have been used in Haverford Township, and perhaps in Delaware County. The trough was saved and relocated to the township's new Powder Mill Valley Park, nestled into an existing natural spring.

Unfortunately, in the half-century since then, the trough became hidden in overgrowth, filled with caked-up natural debris, covered with moss and other growth, and stained by mildew and mold. Soggy ground kept it from being easily accessible. On January 22, 2019 a hard freeze facilitated a second rescue of the heavy granite trough. Township Public Works used a large machine to move the trough to a better and more visible location along the path behind Nitre Hall. Successive cleanings have made its granite glisten and the memorial inscription to Annie Lowry is readable once more.



So who was Annie Lowry? Annie L. Lowry (1823-1908) was a resident of Philadelphia. Annie married an attorney who died relatively young, leaving her a wealthy widow who lived with two older unmarried sisters. During her life, she involved herself as a volunteer, officer and patroness in causes of the day like animal welfare, anti-vivisection, women's rights and temperance. Her interests aligned with many activist women in her era. She has been described as "a woman of marked personality and vigorous opinions, and one was her hatred of cruelty to helpless creatures, human or dumb."

In Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was organized in 1867. Today the Pennsylvania S. P. C. A. touts itself as the first humane society in the state and second in the country. While women constituted a major part of its volunteers and supporters, its early board of directors and officers were all men, so in 1869 (150 years ago this year!) a Women's Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with an all-female board of directors, was established. Among her many interests, Annie Lowry was particularly involved with the Women's Pennsylvania S. P. C. A. from its creation. She served as its vice-president for many years. She died in August 1908 at the age of 85. In her widely-publicized will, she left a hefty half-million dollars, out of a total estate of \$600,000, to charity. She bequeathed specific amounts to nearly fifty institutions and societies for specific purposes. She bequeathed \$55,000 to her beloved Women's Pennsylvania S. P. C. A. With one specific bequest, they established an Annie L. Lowry Home for Smaller Animals at 86th St. and Eastwick Ave. in Philadelphia in 1912. It was the first animal shelter in America, with the nation's first animal adoption program. Another specific bequest of Annie Lowry to that group was to be used to provide public water troughs throughout the area. (She funded some during her life as well.) Our Lowry trough is one of these, carved to a standard design, with two heights for serving horses and small animals.

1890 SPRINGFIELD TRAPDOOR RIFLE — by Irene Coffey

Last fall an anonymous donor gifted the Historical Society with an 1890 Springfield Trapdoor rifle. Based on 1873 and 1884 designs, these rifles were noted for a serrated trigger, an improved rear sight design, and a hinged breechblock that opened like a trap door when loading the ammunition. They also had a round rod bayonet that doubled as a cleaning rod. These rifles could shoot approximately 10 rounds per minute. That's the technical information.

The Springfield Trapdoor rifle's role in U.S. history is far more interesting. These rifles have been referred to as the guns that won the West. They were used extensively in the American Indian Wars of the late 19th century. Capable of shooting up to 2,400 yards or 1.3 miles, their range was far superior to the guns carried by the Indians who needed to be within half a mile to use their guns effectively. From the time an Indian force was first sighted until they were close enough to inflict damage, the cavalry could fire 15–30 volleys, significantly depleting the Indian attackers.

While newer model guns were developed in the 1890s, rifles based on the 1884 model continued to be issued to American troops through the end of that century. At the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, a man named Billy Grayson fired the first shot in the Philippine-American War using a model 1884 Springfield rifle. That shot is said to have inaugurated the era of American imperialism, with the U. S. maintaining control over the Philippines until 1946.

On the home front, state militias continued to use the rifles into the beginning of the 20th century. Civilians living along the coast were given surplus trapdoor Springfields to protect against a potential German invasion during World War I.



History Pop Quiz

What's wrong in this photo?

Join the conversation on our
Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/Haverford.Historical

Answer(s) in next issue.

COME SEE NITRE HALL !

Many changes are happening at Nitre Hall, thanks to cooperation between the township (which owns and is responsible for the building itself) and HTHS. The driveway and rear path have been repaved. The HTHS office is updated and truly nice to be in. The Map Room and Research Room are being continuously outfitted and organized. A new, up-to-date electrical service is being installed, along with a new, comprehensive safety and security system. An enlarged accessible restroom is in the plans, to better serve our school programs. Public display rooms are being repainted for the first time in decades. Come to the Festival, an open house, or during our work sessions (most Tuesdays between 10am and 2pm).

Check your mailing label to determine your HTHS membership or financial donation status. Here are the codes:

- Ixx **Individual** member and 2-digit year for which dues were paid (\$15)
- Hxx **Household** member and 2-digit year for which dues were paid (\$20)
- Dxx **Donor** and 2-digit year of most recent general donation
- Nxx **Nitre Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$25)
- Lxx **Lawrence Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$50)
- Fxx **Federal Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$100)
- COMPL. **Complimentary** newsletter (other history groups and some officials)

Sample label:

John & Jane Doe H18D17
 123 Main Street
 Havertown, PA 19083

Only I19 and H19 memberships have paid 2019 dues. **Renew today!** We need you! (Check to "HTHS" or Paypal on our website)

Find Us Online!

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- Instagram: www.instagram.com/haverfordhistorical
- Twitter: [@HaverfordHist](https://twitter.com/HaverfordHist)

Send your comments and suggestions for this newsletter to us via email:
info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org
 Editor Spring 2019 – Richard Kerr



HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

80 YEARS OF SERVICE
(1939-2019)

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org