



The Haverford Herald

2020 Issue

Newsletter of the Haverford Township Historical Society

Our 81st Year

www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org

FROM OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It goes without saying that 2020 has posed many challenges for all of us. Unfortunately the Historical Society's three large public events, which are also important fundraisers (the Heritage Festival, Oktoberfest and the Holiday House Tour) all had to be cancelled. The proceeds from these events go directly to HTHS to help maintain NITRE HALL, LAWRENCE CABIN and THE FEDERAL SCHOOL. We are asking you to consider making a gift in any amount, no matter how small, to help our efforts for the continued historic preservation of these structures. Donations can be made by check or on our website using PayPal. We appreciate your support. Thank you!

Terri Dougherty
President, HTHS

EDITOR'S NOTE

Last fall, *The Haverford Herald* advertised our public program about the Flu Pandemic of 1918. It is historically ironic that we must now live with the social and scheduling uncertainties brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020! Throughout this year, the Board of Directors has planned and hoped to hold our usual array of events, meetings and open houses, only to have to cancel them, one by one, at the last moment when a final decision was necessary. We are still optimistically discussing and planning future activities, so that if they can happen we will be ready.

In 2019 historical groups throughout Delaware County focused on "The Year of the Mills." In 2020, groups nationwide mark the centennial of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote, to celebrate that milestone and spotlight other accomplishments by women. We have made that a focus in this issue of our newsletter. Enjoy!

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021



It's now time to renew (or join) the Haverford Township Historical Society for 2021. A renewal form and addressed envelope are included with this issue for your convenience, or you can do everything online on our website. Those who join now will become members at once, receiving the remainder of 2020 free, on top of being members through 2021. As you may know, we are a non-profit depending entirely on members, donors and volunteers. While we are housed in historic buildings owned by Haverford Township and bring them to life (and ourselves contribute to their care and costs), no township funds enter our organization's budget. We rely on our members and donors. Please join us and support our work in 2021 and beyond!

ALICE PAUL – WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE ACTIVIST



Did you know that one of the less remembered but important figures in the Women’s Suffrage movement was from the Philadelphia-area? Alice Paul was born in 1885 to Quaker parents in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. She dedicated her life to the single cause of securing equal rights for women. A determined, highly-educated, pivotal figure in the fight for the right to vote, she was the architect of some of the most outstanding political achievements on behalf of women in the 20th century. She undertook campaigns, hunger strikes and endured political imprisonment and force feedings in order to stir up public attention and outcry in favor of the cause. After seeing the 19th Amendment finally passed in 1920, she set her sights on an Equal Rights Amendment, introducing a bill in 1923. Such an amendment was ultimately passed by Congress in 1972, but has not been ratified by the required minimum of 38 states.

***Suffragette in White:** Alice Paul toasts the passage of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920 (with grape juice).*

JANE FENN HOSKINS (HOSKENS) – COLONIAL QUAKER PREACHER



Dr. George Smith, in his 1862 seminal history of Delaware County, wrote that Jane Fenn, born in London in 1693, at age 16 “became the subject of a religious impression that it was her duty to visit Pennsylvania” and at 19 “yielded implicit obedience.” She sailed to Philadelphia in 1712 with Robert Davis of Wales and his family. Davis had paid her way, on her promise of repayment, but he later decided she “should bind herself as a servant four years, which being contrary to her agreement with him, she resisted.” She was jailed and subsequently rescued by four “Friends of Plymouth, who paid Davis, and employed her to teach their children.” She began attending Quaker meetings with them, eventually becoming a Quaker herself “and soon afterwards appeared in the ministry.”

Fenn came to Haverford Township after completing her service to the Plymouth Friends. Smith continues, “One First Day at Haverford Meeting, David Lloyd and his wife, from Chester, came in, and at once the impression came strongly on Jane that ‘these were the people with whom she must go and settle.’ David and his wife had fixed their eyes on the young woman, and had come to the conclusion that ‘she was or would be a preacher.’ They ‘were tendered’ towards her, ‘and it was fixed in their minds to take her under their care, and nurse her for the Lord’s service.’ She eventually, in 1719, became an inmate of David Lloyd’s house, and a member of his family. She frequently spoke in meetings, and made journeys ‘in the service of truth,’ to the other provinces, often accompanied by Elizabeth Levis, afterwards Shipley. In 1727 she visited Great Britain and Ireland in the same service. In 1738 she was married to Joseph Hoskins, of Chester. Jane Hoskins was a woman of undoubted ability, and her peculiar temperament eminently fitted her for the ministry.”

NITRE HALL'S NEW LEASE ON LIFE -- By Richard Kerr

Nitre Hall is a truly remarkable historic building. After being erected for powdermaster William Rogers, and lived in by his family and servants in the first half of the 1800s, it then remained inhabited but frozen in time. It stayed largely unaltered, compared with the nearby Grange, which has been enlarged, Victorianized, altered and modernized during its long history as a stately residence.

In 1958 the Society for Preservation of Landmarks, Nitre Hall's last private owners, conveyed it with 8 acres of land to Haverford Township as part of the creation of Powder Mill Valley Park along Cobb's Creek. Even then, the house and its occupants had no modern conveniences and no utilities. Amazingly, it was not until the late 1960s that a water line replaced the well, a sewer connection replaced the outhouse, electric and telephone services were installed, and electric heating replaced the iron stoves and fireplaces. While window woodwork and shutters have been repaired and replaced, new stucco and shingles applied, and the entrance stairway, porch and rear footbridge re-created, Nitre Hall has never been enlarged or "reimagined." William Rogers would readily recognize it, two hundred years later.

Oddly, once Haverford Township and the Haverford Township Historical Society repaired and stabilized Nitre Hall, making it an historically furnished treasure, the building essentially froze in time again. Now, after another half-century of suspended animation, it has been getting some much-needed attention. This work deserves description here.

The Historical Society competed for, and won, a Conservation Assessment Program grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to undertake a study of the building and our collection. The 2013 report by professional consultants outlined needs and recommended corrective steps that should be taken to "raise the bar" in our volunteer stewardship efforts. With a grant from the township, we followed up on the CAP study, commissioning historic architect Dan Campbell to do a more thorough analysis of Nitre Hall, including a structural engineering analysis. He developed more detailed, individual, sequential steps to achieve the CAP study recommendations. We, in concert with the township as owner of the building, have been planning and undertaking that work since then. Prudence and public safety, particularly in our annual, large on-site school programs, dictated that we bring things up to current standards.

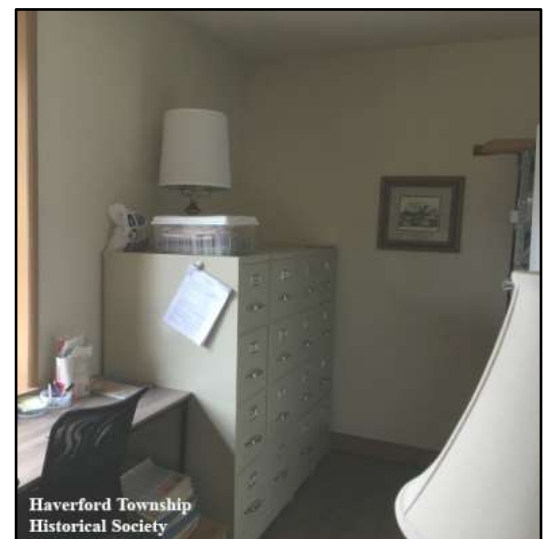


The first step in the sequential work plan was the renovation of our Society office on the ground floor, where we had been "making do" in a 1960s bedroom. (The red shag carpet and the bathtub just had to go!) As part of this work, some interior walls were reframed and built in slightly moved locations, planning ahead for the next stage. That next stage was the replacement and modernization of the adjacent electrical service closet. The electric service hub was totally replaced with a compact installation against the new office walls. Dan's clever, space-gaining plan then allowed us, in a third stage, to gut and rebuild the small public bathroom, enlarging it to address modern accessibility requirements. In related work, emergency exit signs and emergency lights have been added to the building. An updated fire safety and security system was installed. The guidance of the township building codes staff included advising on the number and locations of fire extinguishers. We added internet service for the first time. We are no longer working in the 1960's.

We launched a related effort to stop storing a large amount of bulky event supplies and materials in Nitre Hall, especially the lugging of large, heavy things up and down all the twisty, tight-clearance stairs to the attic. Eliminating this constant seasonal wear and tear on an historic building, as well as ourselves, was a top priority. The Society came up with a plan and undertook the long process of locating, designing, receiving approvals, and constructing a new storage shed for these materials. Cooperating and benevolent contractors, working with a team of volunteers, have made the “Rogers Storehouse” a reality. It sits behind the Summer Kitchen and is designed in a matching rustic style.



With room freed up inside Nitre Hall, Society volunteers have been busy in a continuing process to sort, store, and upgrade the archival keeping of our history collections. Flat files and a large industrial shelf unit now make our extensive collection of atlases and maps readily accessible, as well as artwork, deeds and other items in the “Map Room” on the third floor. Our new Haverford newspaper collection rests in sorted and labeled archival boxes on newly-installed metal shelving in this room. We have also been sorting, listing and upgrading the storage of our photographs and old documents. In this work area of the building, the “Research Room” across the hall houses our vertical files and glass plate negatives, as well as our newly-sorted, listed and archivally-stored slide collections. A major, multi-year sorting and re-filing of many loose historic and society papers is wrapping up. We made room to work, and we’ve been working.



Following that, the Historical Society and the township focused on the next planned phase of work on the building, which was to address Nitre Hall's historic kitchen and the narrow working "galley" kitchen. The latter was of "mid-century modern" vintage, and we laughingly still referred to it as the "modern kitchen." A new doorway directly into the historic kitchen from the ground floor hallway ("Gunpowder Hall") has been added, similar to what once existed. Our docent guides no longer have to lead visitors through the unsightly, wrong-era working kitchen to see the historic one. That working kitchen is now no longer unsightly, because it was gutted and has received a full upgrade. In the process of doing that, we serendipitously discovered the elusive water service entry point for the building, so we replaced the main shutoff valves. Nitre Hall's plumbing is now "up to code."

When the 1960s drywall was removed in the working kitchen, we uncovered a small semi-circular, brick-lined alcove recessed within the deep thickness of Nitre Hall's exterior stone wall, just to the right of the large kitchen fireplace. We consequently modified our plans for a small kitchen closet and a pass-through opening into the historic kitchen, so that this new discovery could be featured and made more visible to visitors in the historic kitchen through a larger pass-through wall opening. The old brick floor of the historic kitchen and the hallway has been lifted, leveled and reinstalled.



Completion of the kitchen phase has largely concluded the work on Nitre Hall's ground floor. We should also note in this summary that all of the inside public display rooms and areas have received their first overall repainting of ceilings, walls and woodwork in a half-century.

All of this overdue and much-needed work, both in materials and labor, has been done carefully in the most cost-conscious and historically appropriate way, compatible with a proper and presentable result. Our goal has been to make this historic building safe, functional, user friendly and memorable for our visitors, including the children, so that they will want to return. The Historical Society is now better positioned to continue to tell our story and maintain our Haverford history archives well into the future.

Please plan on visiting Nitre Hall to see this renaissance firsthand, when conditions permit the reopening of the building to the public.

JEAN SHILEY JUMPED FROM BROOKLINE TO WORLDWIDE FAME

Jean Shiley, a self-described tomboy as a young kid, grew into a talented athlete in Haverford High School's sports program for girls in the late 1920s. She was "discovered" by a sports reporter and the U.S. Olympic track coach late in 1927, resulting in a whirlwind that took her to the summer Olympic Games in Amsterdam in 1928 (her junior year), where she finished narrowly out of the medals in the high jump. This was the first Olympics to offer women's track and field events. For the next four years she dominated her competitors, holding the women's high jump U.S. and world records, both outdoor and indoor. Jean then won the gold medal at the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles in a highly-contested "jump-off." No Pennsylvania schoolgirl could better her 1928 state high school high jump record until 1973.

For more, see our website: haverfordhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/haverford_firsts/HTHS_12_Jean_Shiley.pdf



EDITH P. HANNUM — HAVERFORD STALWART



EDITH P. HANNUM

Edith Hannum was born in Haverford Township in 1885. Her family home was the historic Simon Litzenberg house, which dated back to about 1750, incorporated a log cabin and was located near Darby Road and Dartmouth Lane. In 1922 she was appointed Haverford Township Commissioner for the Fourth Ward, serving out the remainder of the term of Horatio G. Lloyd, a wealthy financier and neighbor. She won public election for the next term, thereby gaining the distinction of becoming the first woman to be elected as a township commissioner in Pennsylvania. She went on to win a long string of four-year terms.

Hannum was publicly honored by the Township Board of Commissioners and the statewide township commissioners' organization in October, 1949, but she wasn't done. She continued to serve another twenty years until 1969, racking up an incredible 47-year stint in that office and serving on every single committee of the Board of Commissioners over those years.

While a commissioner, Edith Hannum attended meetings in 1933 of a group trying to form a library in Haverford Township. She was chosen to head the committee, then to be temporary president of a formative library association.

The Haverford Township Free library opened during the Great Depression in 1934 in temporary quarters. It soon moved to a vacated bank building at Darby Road and Mill Road, purchased through a generous donation by Horatio G. Lloyd. In 1935 Hannum took the job of library director, which proved to be another long-tenured post. She resigned in 1967 after 32 years of service.

Edith Hannum died in 1979 at the age of 93, having been a lifelong Haverford Township resident. For more details, see https://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/haverford_firsts/HTHS_11_Edith_Hannum.pdf

JULIE GOLD – 1991 “Song of the Year” Grammy Winner

Julie Gold was born in Haverford Township in 1956. Her family later moved to Philadelphia, where she graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls and Temple University. In 1978 she headed to New York City to pursue her dream of being a songwriter. She wrote later, “And while dreams are essential, they don’t pay the rent. For years, I worked various temp jobs while gigging at night and sending songs out whenever possible. I demonstrated vacuum cleaners, Mr. Coffees and toaster ovens. I worked the flea markets, as a proofreader, for a dentist and at a venetian blinds factory. It was a struggle . . . I finally gave in to taking a full-time job as a secretary at HBO in 1984. It was a smart move.” As an emerging singer-songwriter, meanwhile, she appeared at many small venues, including the Main Point on Lancaster Avenue in Bryn Mawr.



Continuing, she wrote, “In 1985, just before my 30th birthday, my parents sent me the piano I grew up playing . . . The next day I sat down and “From a Distance” just poured out of me. On one hand, it took me two hours to write. On the other hand, it took me 30 years. Pick whichever hand makes you happy. I love them both.” She performed this song and her others, while also sending them out to all of her contacts. One day, a phone message from a Nanci Griffith asked if she could include the song in her first album for MCA. Nanci’s rendition gained a worldwide following. Meanwhile, Julie was still a secretary. In 1989 she was contacted by the musical director for Bette Midler, asking about the song. Following that call, Midler recorded “From a Distance” and included it in an album. Gold wrote unassumingly, “People seemed to love it, and I won a Grammy for Song of the Year in 1991. Here I was still living in one dark room, no money, uncertain of my future, and yet my song was on the radio and I had won a Grammy. If that isn’t a dream come true, what is?” That hit greatly improved Julie Gold’s fortunes.

In 2011 Julie Gold wrote a wistful song about the memories of her childhood, growing up on Maple Hill Road in Haverford Township. You can hear her sing “The House on Maple Hill” at www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNK4sOGOQH4

History Pop Quiz

In 1912, Haverford Township was incorporated as a “First Class Township” and went from having supervisors to commissioners.

1. In 108 years, how many women commissioners have we had?
2. Can you name them?

Join the conversation on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/Haverford.Historical

Answer(s) in next issue.

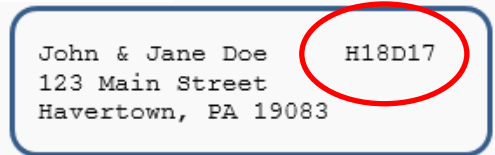
1965 TV SHOW ON “HAVERFORD” SURFACES AND IS RESTORED

In the 1960s, WFIL television (Philadelphia’s Channel 6, now WPVI) produced a regular public affairs series of half-hour shows, each saluting a locality in its coverage area. Recently, surviving and well-preserved film reels for three of these shows were given to Lower Merion Township, entitled “Lower Merion,” “Bryn Mawr” and “Haverford.” LM’s historic preservation staffer Greg Prichard got them restored, cleaned up and digitized, and they are now available for viewing online. The 1965 “Haverford” show covers the postal area with that name, confusingly bridging Lower Merion and Haverford townships. You can find and watch all three here: lmtv.viebit.com/?folder=Eye%20on%20Lower%20Merion

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 (\$25)
- 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:

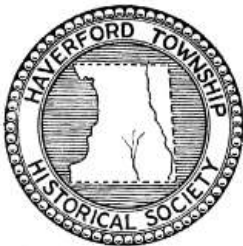


Only **I21** and **H21** memberships have paid 2021 dues. **Please renew today!** (Send check to “HTHS” or use Paypal on our website.)

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 via email: info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org
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HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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