



The Haverford Herald

Fall 2024

Newsletter of the Haverford Township Historical Society

Our 85th Year

www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org

HTHS OKTOBERFEST

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25TH

The Haverford Historical Society is holding its annual Oktoberfest night at Nitre Hall on **Friday, October 25, from 7 pm to 10 pm**. It's always a delightful, low-key evening event with German food and live local entertainment on the upper stage. An exciting silent auction takes place inside Nitre Hall, with many offerings from local merchants! Our Oktoberfest serves as an important fundraiser for the Society. Don't miss it!

For more information and to purchase tickets, see our website:

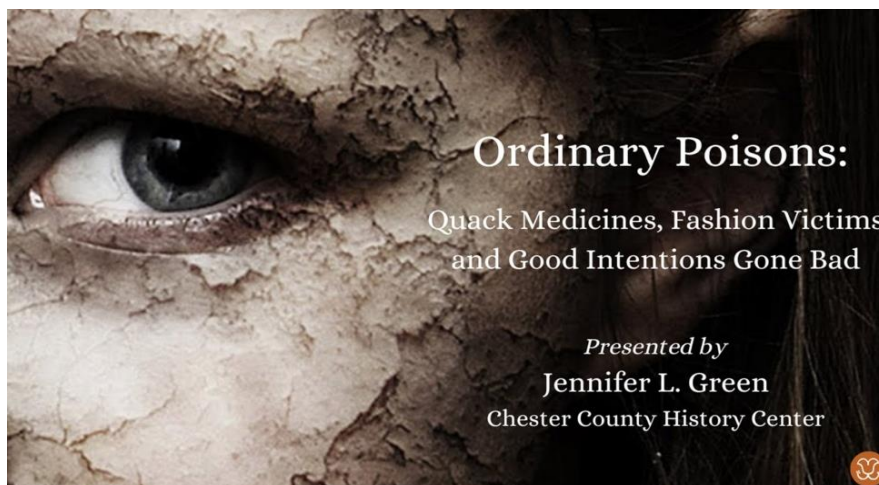
haverfordhistoricalsociety.org/oktoberfest/



HISTORY TALK – ORDINARY POISONS: QUACK MEDICINE, FASHION VICTIMS AND GOOD INTENTIONS GONE BAD

HTHS Fall Program: When: Monday, October 21, 7-8:30 pm

Where: CREC , 9000 Parkview Drive, Haverford



Join us to hear historian Jennifer Green, give her talk, Ordinary Poisons: Quack Medicine, Fashion Victims and Good Intentions Gone Bad. Just in time for Halloween! From arsenic wallpaper to radium water, tutus to soda, Jennifer will explore the different historical ways that everyday objects could kill.

This program is made possible through a partnership between the Haverford Township Library and the Haverford Township Historical Society.

Registration required. <https://haverfordlibrary.org/event/history-talk-ordinary-poisons-quack-medicine-fashion-victims-and-good-intentions-gone-bad-crec/>



KERR DESCRIBES HISTORY OF TOWNSHIP SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Children going “off to school” has been part of life in Haverford Township for over 225 years. Starting with the Federal School in 1797, our township has seen 25 public schools and about nine religious and private schools. The early public school buildings had a bewildering array of naming conventions, and often uncertain dates of operation. About half of our public school buildings are still in use or remain as preserved structures, and five sites have seen successive buildings. Eight public schools were demolished, however, and not replaced nearby.

Last year, HTHS historian Richard D. Kerr completed the difficult task of writing a history of all township school buildings. He clarified dates, the several Manoa, the out-of-order numbering, and locations. The Herald has excerpted Kerr’s histories of seven of eight public school buildings that were demolished and the sites repurposed. The recently razed Brookline School is described in the full article. Kathy Case, HTHS

The complete Kerr history is on the HTHS website under History Resources/Places (haverfordhistoricalsociety.org/places/).

SCHOOLS IN HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP (Excerpt)

By Richard D. Kerr

Lukens School (abt. 1814-1830)

A stone schoolhouse was located on what is now the southeast corner of Manoa Road and Myrtle Avenue, along the descent of Manoa Road toward Cobb’s Creek. It was built on the land of Levi Lukens, who on August 8, 1812 purchased 110 acres of ground from the tract known as “The Grange,” then owned by the Brinton family. The school faced the road, as today’s Myrtle Avenue was then a lane leading to the Lukens barn and came to a dead end at the Grange property a short distance beyond. The school was built by John Lukens, Robert Clark, John Hayes, and others, in about 1814. It appears on the 1816/1818 Mellish/Whiteside map of Delaware County. According to earlier research, the children of William Johnson, Levi Lukens, Dennis Kelly, and George Smith attended this schoolhouse. It was torn down about 1835, having been discontinued as a schoolhouse, likely when the Cobb’s Creek school was built. By 1840, when Townsend Cooper purchased this ground from Lukens, the school had disappeared. The present day house on this corner, at the northern segment of Myrtle Road, is 701 E. Manoa Road.

Haverford Seminary No. 2 (1846-1883)



This small school was built on the site of the earlier Edgewood School to replace it, as part of the still fairly new public school system. Reportedly it rested on the same foundation as its predecessor building. Mary Bessor, Tillie Williams, Mary Donnelly, Frank Rodgers and William Glee are recorded as having taught in this school. By 1883, this school was in turn replaced by Haverford Public School No. 2. After a fire destroyed the roof of the disused “seminary” building, it was torn down between 1928 and 1933 (accounts differ).

The datestone from this school, reading “Haverford Seminary #2 1846,” was saved and built into the community hall of the Bon Air Fire Company, and in 1963 was moved again to the entry hall of Manoa School.

Kelly's School (by 1848—at least 1870)



This small private schoolhouse was located on the east edge of Haverford Township on land owned by highly successful textile mill owner Dennis Kelly and later Sarah O'Connor, his married daughter. It has been dated back to at least 1848 by the 1936 Delaware County WPA survey, and appears marked as a school on the 1870 Hopkins Delaware County atlas map of Haverford Township. It was located on the north side of present-day Powder Mill Lane, between Cobb's Creek and the boundary with Lower Merion Township. It served as a school for the children of workers (mostly Irish Catholics) in Kelley's mills in the 19th century. Earlier research indicates that Cora Shaw

and Henry McClosky, as well as students from Villa Nova College (as Villanova University was called in those times), were employed here as teachers. The building lasted until 2000 as a home, when it was torn down to make room for new homes. It is wrong to call it the "first St. Denis School," and it was not really a parochial school.

Haverford Public School No. 3 (also called "Redmont School") (1869-1896)

This school was on the south side of present-day Manoa Road, two hundred and fifty yards west of Darby Road. On August 24, 1869, the School District of Haverford Township purchased one acre of ground from William Davis and wife, on which a one-room school house was built. While officially known as Haverford Public School #3, earlier research notes that Sallie Eachus, the first teacher, called the building "Redmont School" owing to the ground being red clay, and that some of the teachers at this school were Sallie Lewis and Miss Mater. On May 27th, 1896, a portion of this ground was granted to the Philadelphia and Delaware County Railroad as a right of way for its proposed railroad line. The school was discontinued in 1896, and in September 1897 the pupils were transferred to the new Manoa Public School (see below). On December 31st, 1898, the property was sold at an auction sale to William H. Stewart and the school was torn down.

Today there are two double houses on the site, owned in 1936 by the widow of Mr. Stewart. Mrs. Stewart retained the datestone, which reads "Haverford Public School No. 3 – 1869," taken from the old school building. It is now preserved by the Haverford Township Historical Society. The two double houses still stand at 37 and 39, and 41 and 43 Manoa Road.

Haverford Public School No. 1 (1872-1912)



Sometimes referred to as the "Coopertown School and Lyceum" or "Penn Hall," this two-story brick building was located within the fork where present-day Coopertown Road and Darby Road separate, just south of the Federal School. Built by the Penn Hall Association, a civic organization, it was sold to the school district on March 27, 1873.

The ground floor served as the school, while the upper floor served as a community meeting hall. The school was discontinued in 1913 (Oakmont School opened this building). A datestone, reading "Haverford Public School #1 – 1872," was located above the door leading into the school room.

The upstairs Lyceum, a meeting room, also had a datestone. It was located on a building wall and read "Penn Hall – 1872." These stones are preserved today by the School District of Haverford Township in its Oakmont administration building.

Preston School (1913-after 1958)



Construction of the larger, institutional- looking Preston School began in 1913, to replace the earlier, smaller Haverford Public School No. 5, also called "Preston Public School." A six-room, two-floor stone schoolhouse, it was located on a two-acre lot on the south side of Martin Avenue. When Coopertown Elementary School opened its doors in 1958, some Preston students were transferred to that school. Later, the Preston School was closed completely, with all students in that area attending Coopertown. The building was finally torn down in 1972. Its location is now the parking area of present-day Preston Park.

Manoa School (1928-2010)



The large two-story, institutional- looking stone Manoa School building, the last of the series, was built to replace the second Haverford Public School No. 2 ("Manoa Public School") to address a rapidly growing population in the Manoa area. It was located on the northeast corner of Manoa Road and Furlong Avenue, where the school it supplanted had been located. Even this larger building had to be expanded several times. After over 80 years of service, it was replaced in 2010 by the Manoa Elementary School at Manoa and Eagle roads, and its location is now a playfield.

HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2024 WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS — ON TO 2025!

By John Kirkland

HTHS hosted another successful fundraising event, our 16th "annual" Haverford Heritage Festival. June 2 was a bright and sunny day, and thousands came out to enjoy strolling along Karakung Drive, visiting the different crafter booths, listening to live music, enjoying delicious food from local food trucks and having refreshing libations courtesy of Conshohocken Brewing. Tours of Nitre Hall, Historic and Antique cars from members of the Historic Car Club of Pennsylvania, and Fletcher the micro, mini Highland cow and his porky friend were popular! The beloved model trains were back in operation (with the model of the Beechwood Amusement Park building), live owl and falcon demonstrations enthralled our visitors, and many other activities and sites were enjoyed throughout the day.



CALL FOR DONATIONS!

We need your help to make our programs successful.

Gardeners:

Large pieces of **unwaxed cardboard** with **no tape or staples**
(They are used as weedblockers underneath the wood chips and mulch)

Please leave under the overhang at
the rear shed behind the summer kitchen.

WE NEED YOU!**Colonial Living:**

Candles, wax, etc., to make candles with the 5th graders.

Please leave in bags in between the back door of Nitre Hall.

Beef or pork fat to use for soap

Please call or email us to arrange pickup.

info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org

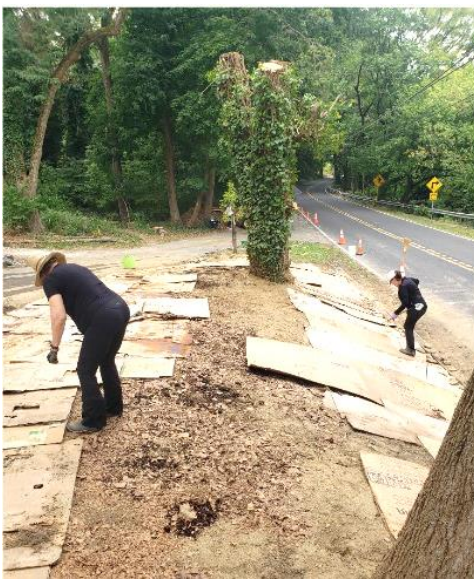
484-452-3382 (leave a message)

MASTERING THE ART OF GARDENING AT NITRE HALL WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS AND VILLANOVA VOLUNTEERS

By Kate Clifford, Lois Puglionesi and Catherine Corson

The Nitre Hall Gardening group, led by the Delaware County Master Gardeners, has been hard at work on the grounds around Nitre Hall and Lawrence Cabin. You may notice their efforts as you walk by or visit us at our upcoming Oktoberfest or when the gardens bloom for the June Heritage Festival.

On September 7, the Gardening Group was assisted by students for Villanova's Day of Service to work on the area around the upper driveway and stage that is the entrance to our site. Our gardeners and volunteers prepared the ground by removing invasive species, laying down cardboard and staking branches to help prevent erosion. The students helped cover the area with wood chips, which are used by the gardeners to access the interiors of the beds and to control the spread of the vegetation so it doesn't get too close to the road or driveway. The area will be planted with native species in the next year.



Villanova students with Gene and Chris from HTHS

Mastering the Art of Gardening (cont)...

Other students and volunteers cleared brush, made a border of railroad ties, and helped remove tape from cardboard, so it could be used as a weed blocker. Trail expert Dan Mercer worked with students on anti-erosion improvements to the trail leading from Lawrence Cabin. The Villanova group also helped lift into vertical position large, engraved stones from old public school buildings, for better display along the handicap entrance ramp.

Thanks to all the students and other volunteers who helped make a very big impact on the entrance to the property.



The gardeners still have a lot of work to do. They meet weekly on alternating Fridays and Saturdays and welcome people of all skill levels to help.

They prefer, but not require, basic gardening skills and knowledge of plants, or strength to do heavier work like moving wheelbarrows of soil, mulch, or wood chips.

We also have Park Cleanup Days throughout the year for invasive species removal and other grounds clearing throughout the Powder Mill Park. The next date is Saturday, October 26, 9-1, rain date November 2.

HTHS AT NEWLIN GRIST MILL'S FALL FESTIVAL

The Haverford Township Historical Society participated in the Newlin Grist Mill Fall Festival on Saturday, September 21, 2024. The Fall Festival is a combination of the Grist Mill's Archaeology and Harvest Festivals, with tables for historical organizations, demonstrations of historical crafts, kids' activities, archaeology demonstrations and lots more. Over 500 visitors came out to enjoy the day. The HTHS table featured information about our society and upcoming events and showed items that were found around Nitre Hall.



HTHS President Kate Clifford at the Newlin Grist Mill Festival



20th Century glass bottles found in the gardens around Nitre Hall

HISTORIC GRANGE AND HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

By Kathy Parkinson

In 1974, The Historic Grange Estate came very close to being a strip mall and an office building. The events that unfolded to save what was an unknown historical treasure are truly remarkable. For those who do not know the full history of the Grange, it began in 1682 when Henry Lewis, Sr., purchased land from an agent representing William Penn, whom King Charles II had named Proprietor of thousands of acres in what became Pennsylvania. In the ensuing centuries, several owners changed the property significantly. The Grange you see today represents the mid-19th century mansion and gentleman's country seat envisioned by John Ashhurst.

After the death of his father, Henry Lewis, Jr., built the first increment of the current mansion in about 1700. In 1730, he extended the home to include what is today the hall, library and second-floor master bedroom. In 1750, Captain John Wilcox purchased the estate and its 322 acres. He added rooms to make the mansion a more formal home. By 1761, Charles Cruikshank was the next owner. John Ross married Cruikshank's daughter and became a key player in the Revolutionary War. In 1782, Ross purchased the property from Cruikshank. This is an interesting time in the history of the Grange. Ross was well acquainted with many notables, including George Washington, who lunched at the Grange a few times. Ross eventually returned to his native Scotland and died suddenly in 1800. His affairs were in disarray, and the Grange changed hands many times in rapid succession.

In 1816, John Eyre purchased various land parcels with the intention of reuniting the Ross holdings. Upon his death he left the use of the Grange to his daughter, Harriet, and her husband John Ashhurst. They bought the Grange plus 103 acres in 1850, and John began substantial modifications with architect John Carver. Together they changed the character of the house to Gothic Revival and unified the outbuildings in the same style. After the Ashhursts died, the estate remained vacant until Benjamin Hoffman took title of the house and 86 acres in September 1914.

In 1922, Benjamin married Margaret Clawson and they moved into the Grange and began rehabilitating the estate. During the depression Benjamin suffered financial reverses and the property was put up for sheriff's sale.

Margaret repurchased the house, outbuildings, and 9.97 acres of gardens and grounds. Upon Margaret's death in 1973, the estate was bequeathed to two nephews. The nephews were not interested in retaining ownership and an auction sign was placed on the property.



Local high school students saw the sign, and even though they did not know the historical significance of the house, they had a gut feeling that it needed to be saved. Those students spoke with a history teacher who contacted a friend who became involved in the "Save the Grange" campaign. That friend, Bev Rorer, is still an active volunteer to this day! The high school students started a grassroots movement to save the Grange and collected money and signatures to present to the township commissioners. Barely before the auction date, the township manager asked the township financial officer and commissioners to find the money for purchase. In the end, agent Benjamin Barnett, Sr., sold the estate to Haverford Township in 1974.

In the last 50 years, the estate has been restored to its 19th century glory under the stewardship of the Friends of the Grange, in partnership with Haverford Township. Today's Grange is a venue for events such as weddings, tours, and special programs. The showcase gardens and house with period furniture reflect the grace of other eras.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 13, 2-4 pm- Penfield/Brookline/Beechwood Walking Tour
 Oct 21, 7-8 pm- Ordinary Poisons talk at CREC.
 Oct 25, 7-10 pm- Oktoberfest
 Oct 26, 9am-1pm- Park Cleanup at Nitre Hall (Rain Date Nov 2)
 (all info is on <https://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org>)

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 (\$20)
 Hxx **Household** member and 2-digit year for which dues were paid (\$30)
 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)
 Pxx **Powder Master Club** donor & 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$200)
COMPL. Complimentary newsletter (other history groups and some officials)
All 2023 memberships are now due. Please renew today! (Send check to "HTHS" or use Paypal on our website.)

Sample label:

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 123 Main Street
 Havertown, PA 19083

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 us via email: info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org
 Editor Fall 2024 – John Kirkland



HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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 Chartered 1964

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