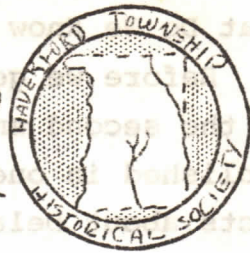


HITS NEWSLETTER



Volume VIII Number 1

Fall 1978

Welcome to this Fall season and save Saturday, October 21, 1978. That is the day of our Fall trip, which has become one of our best days, and is especially looked forward to each year.

We feel we can offer you a very special treat in this trip - Laverne Middlestead and her committee have come up with something special. Here is the day's schedule:

8:50 A.M. - Meet at Temple Lutheran Church, Brookline Boulevard and Earlington Road.

9:00 A.M. - Leave for Odessa, Delaware - please be prompt.

10:30 A.M. - Arrive at Odessa. Tour the Corbit-Sharp house and the Wilson-Warner home, both sponsored by Winterthur Museum

1:00 P.M. (approx.) - Lunch at the Wayside Inn, Smyrn, Delaware.

Total cost: bus, admittance to houses, and lunch - \$12.00

Reservations must be in by Saturday, October 14, 1978.

Please make check to Haverford Township Historical Society, mail to the Society, Bos 825, Havertown, Pa. 19083. Either clip or copy the coupon below and enclose check. Mail it TODAY!

Mail by October 14, 1978 to

Haverford Township Historical Society, Box 825

Havertown, Pa. 19083

Please reserve _____ seats for the Haverford Township Historical Society Fall trip to Odessa, Delaware on October 21, 1978

Enclosed is check for _____ at \$12.00 per person.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

What Do We Know About Delaware?

Before we get into discovering Odessa, let's have a closer look at the second smallest state. In 1976, The Philadelphia Inquirer published in one of their week-end travel trips some fascinating facts about Delaware. It was suggested that most of us probably go through Delaware on the way to some place further South. The writer also suggests that the inhabitants are quite happy and content to be unhampered by tourists. Some places should certainly be seen by anyone with a historical leaning, and you will be welcome.

Wilmington is the largest city and is the home of the Hagley Museum and Eleutherian Mills, the site of the first DuPont powder mill. Also here is Old Swedes Church, the oldest church in the United States, still standing as originally built and still holding regular religious services. Fort Christina is the site of the first permanent settlement, with a historic park and an early log cabin.

The University of Delaware has a Lincoln Room, with over 2,000 books, pamphlets, and photographs. It shows both Lincoln's political side and his home life.

During the Battle of Cooch's Bridge, near Newark, the armies ended at the Battle of Brandywine. Tradition says that the Stars and Stripes first flew over the bridge in a land battle of September 1777.

If you really want to see an early colonial town, nearer to us than Williamsburg, continue to New Castle, one of the most completely preserved examples of colonial life. It was founded 31 years before Philadelphia and was the capital of the Delaware colony from 1704 to 1777, when the British forced the legislature to flee to Dover, which became then and still is the state capital.

There is a special day in June when homes are open - keep watch in the papers. The Court House, built in 1732 and restored in 1801, has a tower from which the Mason-Dixon line was plotted. There is the George Read house, built for the signer's son; the Amstel house built in 1730 where George Washington attended a wedding. Also, the Old Dutch House, dating from the 17th Century, which is the oldest brick structure in Delaware.

Fort Delaware is on Pea Patch Island and serves as a Civil War Museum. It was a prison for Confederate soldiers.

Haverford Township Historical Society

Farther South is the small village of Odessa, home to four classic examples of Colonial architecture - 1774. The two houses we shall visit are under the direction of Winterthur and are well and beautifully furnished. (See other articles.) We may get a peek at the John Janvier Stable (1791) and the Brick Hotel (1822

Continuing on Route 13, we find Smyrna, with Duck Creek Village which has a colonial miller's home (1765) and the Allee House (1755). This was built by a member of the Huguenot Allee family.

Going slightly eastward there is the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge of 15,000 acres.

In Dover, there is the John Dickinson Mansion (1740) and Old Christ Church (1734) where Caesar Rodney rests. Nearby is the Old State House recently restored to 18th Century splendor. The Governor's House, on King's Highway, built about 1790, by a quirk of fate served as an underground railway station.

By now, you would probably like to spend a week in Delaware. As we only have a few hours, let us close in on Odessa.

Odessa.

Odessa is on the banks of the meandering Appoquinimink Creek. The fine homes we see were built by men who helped make this little town the economic center of a busy agricultural area. Originally the town was named after the creek but in 1731, was renamed Cantwell's Bridge in honor of Richard Cantwell who was given authority to build a toll bridge over the creek. Farmers brought their produce to Cantwell's Bridge and shipped their goods in shallops down the Delaware River, then to coastal and foreign ports. By 1825, there were six large granaries along the creek and thousands of bushels of grain were shipped annually. In 1855, the town was doing so well, they again changed its name to Odessa, aspiring to match the Russian seaport which exported Ukrainian wheat all over the world.

When a railroad was built on the Delmarva peninsula, it went through Middletown, four miles west of Odessa. Also the Middle West was emerging as the country's main grain-producing area. Odessa began to decline economically.

Now, we will be visiting a well-restored and carefully tended community with neat lawns and gardens. Many of these were preserved by the late H. Rodney Sharp of Wilmington. They may be greatly admired in a walk through the town.

The Corbit-Sharp House.

William Corbit built this splendid home between 1772 and 1774. He was only 27 when he built it, slightly above the tannery which he operated. It resembles in many ways the elegant early homes of Philadelphia. He kept most careful records which were invaluable in restoring the house. Two things to specially notice are two tall clocks by Duncan Beard and a chest of drawers made by John Janvier, Jr. whose house still stands in Odessa.

There is a spacious lawn sweeping down to the marshes that border the creek. An herb garden is next to the house - laid out in geometrical patterns and heart shapes. Two great sycamores, planted over two hundred years ago, rise above all else.

The house changed in appearance over the years and was owned by Corbit's descendants until 1938. Then H. Rodney Sharp acquired it; he restored and furnished it with fitting antiques. In 1958, Mr. Sharp endowed the house and presented it to Winterthur Museum.

The Wilson-Warner House

Once known as the David Wilson Mansion, this has the same architectural quality and is furnished as graciously as the Corbit-Sharp house, which is just next door.

The earlier part of the home was built around 1740 and received additions in 1769. Wilson's descendants occupied it until 1830, when it was sold out of the family. His great grand-daughter, Mrs. Mary Corbit Warner, acquired it in 1901. It was willed to her heirs at her death in 1923. They followed Mrs. Warner's wishes and administered it as a museum until it was given to Winterthur in 1969.

David Wilson (1743-1820) was a prosperous merchant. His store was east of the house and next to that of William Corbit, brother of Wilson's second wife, Mary.

The interior has fine paneling and is furnished with antiques from the Wilsons and the Corbits, and much more from Dr. and Mrs. J. Newbury Reynolds of Princeton, N.J. There is a desk labelled by William Savery of Philadelphia and much from other fine Delaware Valley Craftsmen.

On the exterior of the kitchen fireplace is a smokehouse. Also Delaware's first public library was in this home until 1968.

About Heritage Day

We want to thank all of the willing volunteers who worked so hard and contributed so much to our Heritage Day. There are too many to mention but we would like to give a special thanks to the American Heritage Ship Guild of the Port of Philadelphia who brought several wagons with all sorts of "contraptions" to hold and trim down (if that is a possible term) a mast. It was quite fascinating to see the great length of a small mast. By now, it is probably doing noble duty on one of their boats. We thank Mr. Cooper, the sailmaker, for telling us about them.

Of course, our fabulous cooks brought so many goodies which were sold at the "Powder Keg." Everything was delicious, plus the on-the-spot cooks in the Cabins who produced johnny cakes spread with our own freshly made butter.

We had a touch of real colonial living - how to spin, how to weave, how to write with ink and use sealing wax, how to dip candles. We saw how sails were made with a display of tools used for the job. We saw how to put stained glass together and watched the Wheelmen ride, marveling how they got on the bikes. Of course, the pipers in full regalia are always a treat to my ears and it seems everyone enjoys them. Although not strictly colonial, we love the antique cars. Thank you all so much!

From the Mailbox! (Many thanks from the editor.)

At long last, I've received three letters. In the past, only one letter at a time might arrive, so I really thank you! They were from Harry Young (who is our financier) Helen Hughes and Ann Blair, who sent clippings and the chapter xeroxed from the Red Arrow, by Ronald deGraw. These clippings will be on exhibit at the next meeting. One great picture of the Beechwood Amusement Park is very exciting.

It would seem that traction companies built amusement parks at a distance from a city which would necessitate using their trolley.

The first park was planned to be at Castle Rock beyond Newtown Square. Land was bought for the park four years before the track was laid. There was a temporary park at Broomall Grove, (the editor's

home town and hitherto unknown to her). There were picnic grounds, refreshment stands, and a dance pavilion. Also there was much advertising pointing out the joys of speeding through beautiful hills and valleys and avoiding the city streets needed to get to Willow Grove, run by the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company.

Broomall Grove closed shortly and transferred its equipment to Castle Rock which opened after the trolley ran to West Chester on May 30, 1899. They had a shooting gallery, a small restaurant, a dance pavilion, and special cornet concerts on the weekends. A cornet artist was hired for \$25 per week. He perched high on the rocks while playing. For several years, there was a gala day, "Grand Harvest Home" and Tri-County Reunion," with speeches, contests, dancing and eating, and a minstrel show. There were games for adults and children including a greased pig race, wheelbarrow and sack races. (These are included to whet your nostalgia.)

However, this was before the Elevated had started and it took an hour and a half to get to Castle Rock from Philadelphia. The PRT's Willow Grove and Woodside, run by the Fairmount Park Transportation Company, were much nearer for the people in town. Castle Rock Park closed in 1905.

The Philadelphia and Western at that time was also planning an Amusement Park at Beechwood, so much nearer Philadelphia. They advertised incandescent lighting and smoking at each end of the car.

Please check your last newsletter for facts about the joyful opening on May 30, 1907. Also, some of the very real problems are mentioned and the park closed in August 1909.

In 1919, the powerhouse was abandoned. The high concrete stantions and other remaining parts of the old amusements were dynamited in 1958 at the request of the citizens.

However, when you next go to Beechwood-Brookline Station, look toward the creek and try to envision a lake for boating.

What does it Mean?

by Frank Whitten and Sue Loder.

On one of our famous bus trips, Frank and I were fascinated and amused by expressions that come from the old days. Here are some of them:

bar a wooden frame with bars which was hinged to the top over the counter, and was hooked to the ceiling. In times of high excitement, the bar was unhooked and lowered to protect the liquor supply and valuable glassware.

mind your p's and q's - when the bar was about to close, the barmaid, in order to give you a last drink, would call out, "Mind your pints and quarts," which was soon shortened to p's and q's.

drinking a toast - used to be a drink served with toast on top.

all wool and a yard wide - the usual width of a swath of cloth woven from wool.

linsey-woolsey - material woven with linen for the warp and wool for the woof - maybe vice versa.

in the lime-light - early theatre days used foot lights made by heated lime and oxygen.

There are many more fascinating old expressions and here is where we want to hear from you - any old sayings could be added to a useful collection to present to Nitre Hall.

Please send these and other comments or suggestions to:

Miss Susanne Loder, Editor
307 Joseph Court
160 Long Lane
Upper Darby, Pa. 19082

PLEASE KEEP THESE DATES SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND OUR MEETINGS.

Board Meetings

September 14

November 9

January 11

March 8

June 7

General Membership - Temple Lutheran Church

Earlington Rd. and Brookline Boulevard
Thursdays at 8 P.M.

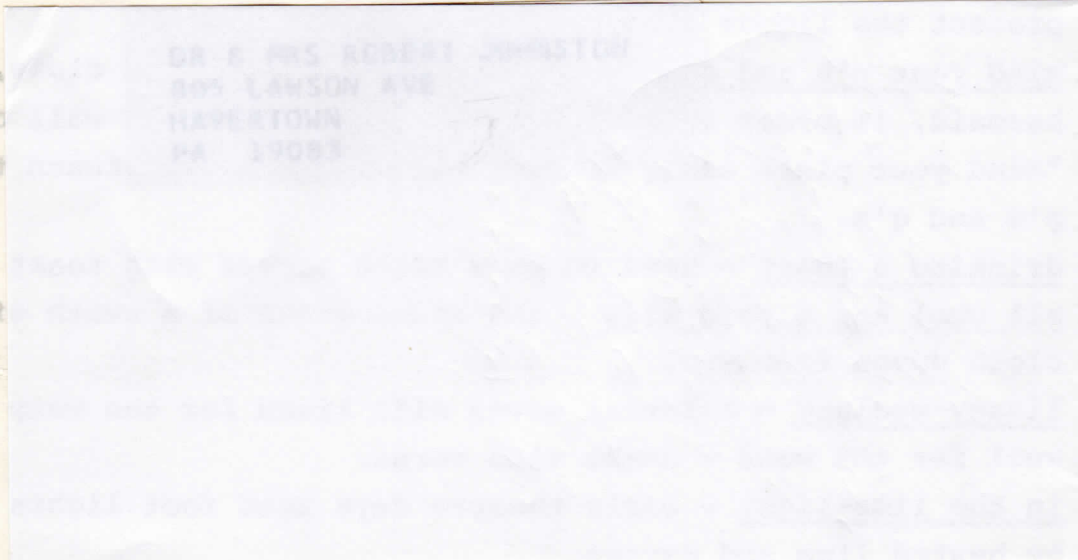
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February 15

April 19

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