



*Phoenix Iron Company,
Administration Building,
Phoenixville*

The Chester County Ledger

The Newsletter of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network

March 2008

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Demolition Is Forever

Jn Chester County we have many places that retain their historic character: farms and pastures, crossroads villages, downtowns, and industrial sites. This wealth of historic resources gives us a sense of pride in who we are and knowledge of from where we have come. The stark reality, though, is that most of our historic resources are gone if you take into consideration all of the houses, barns, churches and meetinghouses, stores, offices, mills and factories, fencerows, roads, and bridges that were constructed between 1682 and 1958 (to apply the minimum fifty-year standard for National-Register eligibility). What remains is just a smattering of everything that was here.



Roger Hunt Mill House, Downingtown, 2007



Roger Hunt Mill House, Downingtown, 2008

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network is an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving Chester County's historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy.

To be sure, we have more than most counties, but this just illustrates how much has been lost in those other communities. We are rich in resources in comparison, but we do not have many to spare.

In Pennsylvania we face a number of forces that make it easy to demolish historic resources. One is that because we have so many resources, we feel that the loss of this corn crib or that road trace has

no consequences. Our agricultural heritage is disappearing and with it the cultural identity that has defined us. Our history is unique, just as the histories of Montgomery, Delaware, and Berks Counties are unique; but more and more we all look alike.

Second, development pressures and ideas about "growth" and "progress"

favor remaking the landscape into whatever will serve the next commercial, residential, industrial, or institutional building type. Convenience stores are getting larger, putting historic crossroads communities at risk, because they cannot accommodate wider roads or acre-sized stores. Shipping relies on the volume of the tractor-trailer, which suits suburban stores, but not small, downtown shops. These realities, however, create issues that require creative solutions. The first step for accommodating change need not be the application for a demolition permit. Just because an existing building does not suit the one use that is currently on the table does not mean that it cannot suit any other use, now or in the future. A few decades ago, many people predicted the demise of historic downtowns. They looked at shopping trends and changes in transportation and shipping and could not see how these historic buildings could accommodate the new modes of living. Now, many of these towns are vibrant with new shops, restaurants, and cultural venues, and preservation has often been the key ingredient. We have demonstrated that preserving historic buildings adds value, economic and cultural.

Third, regulations, ordinances, and plans tend to favor growth and only rarely provide sufficient means to protect buildings just for their historic or cultural value. To name one example, the Municipalities Planning Code states that every township must accommodate industrial, commercial and residential uses irrespective of whether the township is primarily rural or urban or whether it is near or far from transportation routes. This is a recipe for low-density growth that can, as we see in Chester County, spread quickly over a large area.

These three forces, and there are many more that could be enumerated, account for the loss of most of our resources today, and would account for a lot more if not for the efforts of the preservation community, which includes concerned citizens, elected officials, government administrators, volunteers, consultants, architects, carpenters, and historians, to name only a few. But how do they do what they do when facing so much pressure?

They raise awareness, make telephone calls, talk to the press, rally support, support the election of pro-preservation officials, support the hiring of pro-preservation administrators, contact state and federal organizations, and, basically, make a fuss. Comprehensive plans are revised, ordinances are passed, and legislation gets signed into law. They do everything they can. And thankfully their ranks are growing. New people are joining historical commissions, new people are becoming members of regional land trusts and preservation organizations, and some progress is being made.

Residents and visitors alike are proving that they prefer historic Chester County with its historic communities, landscapes, and resources to an alternative consisting of the same houses, shops, and streetscapes like those found everywhere. They demonstrate this by paying more for a historic house than a newer house of comparable size. They are thronging to the restaurants of West Chester and the bookstores of Phoenixville, to name only two of the many revitalizing communities. As you know, both of these towns went through very tough times, but now, thanks to the successful preservation efforts, people are looking at these towns and saying to themselves: "I want to live

continued on page 4

The Chester County Ledger

Editor Matthew E. Roberson
Circulation Director Robert Layman
Marketing Director Robert Wise

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Direct all queries to: The Editor, CCHPN, P.O.Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Letters to the Editor and articles for the *Chester County Ledger* are welcome. There is no guarantee, however, that submissions will be published. No such submissions will be returned. The CCHPN does not necessarily endorse the content of advertisements herein.

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Spring 2008 Workshop Perspectives on the Demolition of Historic Structures

Will the Walls Come Tumbling Down???

Perspectives on Demolition of a Township Manager, a Historical Commission Member, an Attorney, and a Historic Property Owner

March 8, 2008

8:15 am - 1:30pm

Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford

8:15a **Registration**, Continental Breakfast, Displays

Welcome, CCHPN President, Brandywine Conservancy, Brandywine River Museum

Introduction to Workshop:

Breakout Session #1

Administration: *Terry Woodman*, Manager, East Whiteland Township

Historical Commission: *Sandy Momyer*, Chairman, Schuylkill Township Historical Commission

Attorney: *Glenn Diehl, Esq.*

Breakout Session #2 and Lunch

Session Report

Property Owners: *Kathy and Brian Gregory*

Speaker's Panel and Q & A

1:30p **Wrap Up and Adjournment**

Workshop counts for HARB/CLG Continuing Education Credits.
Attendance also gives free admission to the museum and gift shop.

Registration Fee for training session and box lunch: \$15 for paid members (up to four people on a municipal membership), \$20 for non-members. Please mail your registration form below by February 29, 2008. Payment can be made at the door. Reserve early because seating is limited!



Workshop Registration Form Please R.S.V.P. by February 29, 2008

Please send a completed registration form indicating the number of people attending to the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, P.O. Box 174, West Chester, PA 19381. Walk-ins are welcome, but registration helps us plan for the lunch order. For questions, please call Bob Wise at (484) 202-8187 .

Name(s) of attendee(s):

Organization:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

here, visit the library here, and attend a cultural event here. I want to be in this community in this setting with these amenities.”

Around Chester County, though, the desire to demolish is great mostly because the growth pressure is great. Significant buildings are being torn down, not just the run-down tenant houses or the dilapidated springhouses. There are still a large number of people who do not value historic buildings and landscapes, and there are developers who rely upon these attitudes when seeking development approvals in every township and borough in the county.

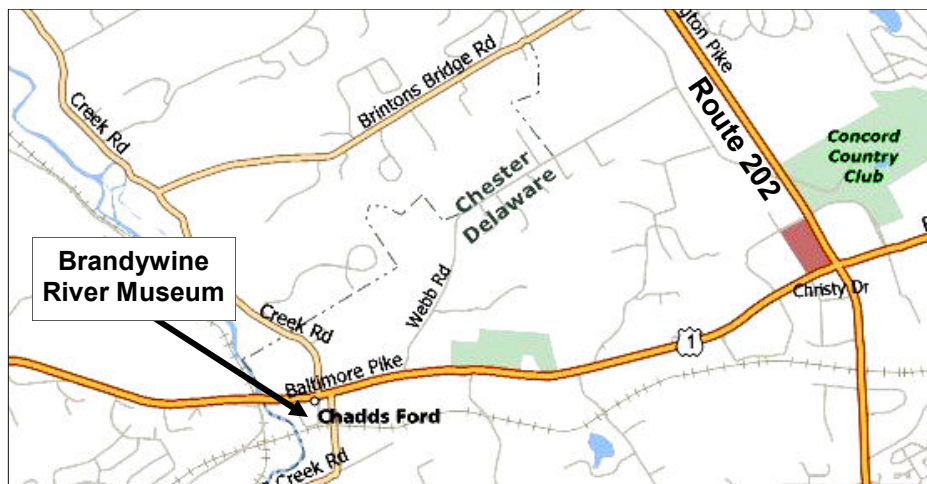
By now you may be asking, What can I do? To start, you can join your local historical commission, give money to a preservation organization, talk to your neighbors about the value of preservation, and tell your elected official that preservation is very important to you.

You can also attend the Spring 2008 Workshop on Demolition held by the Chester County Historic Preservation Network on March 8, 2008, at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford. At this workshop you will get a variety of perspectives on demolition. The program will feature a township manager, a historical commission member, an elected official, an attorney, and a homeowner. Each speaker has a different view on the process by which a building is demolished or saved. There will also be a work session allowing attendees to explore strategies to save a building.

We hope you will attend!

- Matthew E. Roberson
Restoration Carpenter
CCHPN Board Member

Directions to the Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford: The museum is located on Route 1, in Chadds Ford, about a mile west of its intersection with Route 202. The entrance to the museum is on the south side of Route 1, just east of the bridge over the Brandywine River.



Workshop Speakers In Their Own Words

Terry Woodman

East Whiteland Township Manager

Ms. Woodman has provided leadership to local governments in Chester County for more than 20 years. Currently Township Manager for East Whiteland Township, she works closely with the three elected Supervisors to establish the organization's direction, oversee its management, communicates with private citizens, corporate citizens, county and state agencies and township employees.

Prior to joining East Whiteland in 2001, Terry served as Assistant Township Manager in Tredyffrin Township where, for fifteen years, she worked closely with the Planning Commission, Environmental Advisory Council Historical Architectural Review Board and Zoning Hearing Board in addition to the seven member Board of Supervisors. Her work in that Community was recognized in 1996 by the Paoli Business and Professional Association when she received the "Citizen of the Year Award."

Woodman graduated magna cum laude from West Chester University with a bachelor's degree in geography with a minor in urban planning. Currently she serves on the Board of Directors for the Upper Main Line Senior Center, the U.S. Rt. 202 Executive Board, the Chester County Water Resources Board and the Board of Directors of the Woodlynde School. She has served on the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) Brownfield Advisory Task Force and the Chester County Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Until recently she also volunteered her time to the annual March of Dimes "Salute to Chester County Women of Achievement" event.

Sandra S. Momyer

Chair, Schuylkill Township Historical Commission

Sandy Momyer was appointed to the commission at its founding in 2003 and elected as its chair in 2007. She assisted in the writing of the historic site overlay section of the Township Comprehensive Plan and is now working on the beginning phases of a project to install historical interpretation signage for the township. Being relatively new as a commission, work is still progressing with the Chester County Atlas project and updating our 1981 Historic Resources List. The first Founders Day program has been

established with the township as well as a recognition program for highlighting our outstanding citizens. In 2008 we will begin to recognize outstanding historic preservation projects.

In 2004, Sandra joined the Board of Directors of the Schuylkill River Heritage Center at Phoenixville and now serves as its vice president. Located in the recently restored historic Foundry Building, this organization promotes the heritage of the Schuylkill River and the iron and steel industry of Phoenixville.

For fifteen years Sandra served as the Executive Director of Historic Yellow Springs, Inc., retiring in 2001. She now serves part time as its archivist. With current Executive Director, Rob Lukens, she co-authored the book, *Yellow Springs*, a photographic history of Yellow Springs, published in 2007. She continues to research and write pieces for Historic Yellow Springs, Inc. and Schuylkill Township.



Sandra S. Momyer



Glenn R. Diehl, Esq.

Glenn R. Diehl, Esq.

Glenn Diehl is a West Chester attorney whose practice concentrates on municipal law, zoning, land development and real estate. Mr. Diehl works with municipalities, property owners and developers. He has drafted many land use ordinances and has worked on projects involving the preservation of historic structures and open spaces.

Making History Accessible...One Community at a Time

On September 15, 2007, the premier of the 50-minute historic documentary, "Tredyffrin Township...The First 300 Years" took place at Wilson Farm Park. The documentary was commissioned by the township to celebrate its 300th anniversary...1707-2007.

Produced by Sage Film and Video, a Chester County-based production company, the documentary features vintage film footage, photos, maps, original letters and journals. The documentary features a rare George Washington letter, excerpts from journals of local residents dating back to the 1800s, a moving letter from a Civil War general on the perils of war, and a present day email from a Marine serving in Iraq.

Much of the story is told by interviewees ranging from a Conestoga High School student to a lively ninety-four-year-old former resident who vividly remembers when the Pennsylvania Ballet held its very first performance at a local farm in the township. Some of the history is illustrated through recreations and vintage film footage.

Using the Ken Burns approach, the principals of Sage, Deborah Arnold and Jane Pollini, connect stories and people to create a sense of intimacy bringing to life

the shared experiences of multiple generations in a community. They have developed a seamless process that enables the community to direct the content. Sage takes that content and shapes it into a story that reflects the "personality" of the community.

Over a 14-month period, Sage worked closely with Pattye Benson, President of the Historic Preservation Trust and Executive Producer of the film, and Judy DiFilippo, Township Supervisor and Associate Producer.

According to DiFilippo, "Our society is so much more visual today...the opportunity to see people and watch their expressions as they tell the stories makes it more special and personal." Benson added, "It is important for communities to... document their history, especially in Pennsylvania. This is one of the oldest parts of the country."

For more information and a free consultation about the many ways Sage Film and Video can help your community or organization recapture its past call 610-408-8982 or email: info@sagefilmmandvideo.com or visit their website: <http://sagefilmmandvideo.com/documentaries> to learn about some of their other documentaries.

Historical Resources Showcased At Recent Forum

The following article appeared in the Sunday, November 25, 2007 issue of CHESTER COUNTY LIVING. It is here reprinted with permission from the Daily Local News.

Award-winning historian David McCullough once said "History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

In Chester County, those words resonate loud and clear. The county's remarkable 325-year history provides a profound sense of community and shared identity.

On Friday, Nov. 16, 60 representatives of historical commissions, historical and architectural review boards, concerned citizenry, private institutions and the preservation field explored issues of history, historic preservation and community in a single forum. The purpose of the evening was to bring to the fore the

most pressing issues of local and state preservation efforts.

State Sen. Andy Dinniman, D-19th of West Whiteland, was the host for the evening, which began with a tour of his historic office building at 1 N. Church St. in West Chester. West Chester University professor Jim Jones led groups through the building's unusual basement, complete with a historic underground icehouse that extends beneath the sidewalk on Market Street.

To begin the evening's program, Judy DiFilippo, chairwoman of the Chester County Planning Commission and co-chairman of Tredyffrin 300 presented a model community history project. In celebration of the township's 300th anniversary, the Tredyffrin Historic Commission created a documentary film "Tredyffrin... The First 300 Years." The film chronicles the municipality's remarkable past, from its



Discussing the Chester County Historic Resource Atlas Project in Courtroom Two of the county courthouse are, from left, Co-chairman of Tredyffrin 300 Pattye Benson, state Sen. Andy Dinniman, County Historic Preservation officer Karen Marshall and President of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network Bob Wise.

founding to the present, by drawing on oral histories, photographs, home movies and professional reenactments.

DiFilippo emphasized the importance of documenting residents' oral histories, noting "we can never capture that oral history again." The film premiered last summer during an outdoor airing for residents, and is currently available on DVD. A portion of proceeds will help restore the township's historic Jones Log Barn.

Karen Marshall, Chester County's Historic Preservation officer, took the conversation to county-wide levels with her presentation of the Chester County Historic Resources Atlas. In the late 1970s, preservation-minded citizens banded together under the auspices of the Chester County Historical Society and Brandywine Conservancy to create the Chester County Historic Sites Survey. Their purpose was to document every extant structure in the county of 100 years or older found in the 1883 Breou's farm atlas (except those in West Chester and Downingtown). The end result of these efforts was, what Marshall called, "perhaps the most comprehensive survey conducted in the state, or even the country."

Today, the survey needs to be updated and is receiving a serious dose of 21st century technology. Now, nearly 30 years later, the number of structures meeting "historic" criteria has skyrocketed. Chester

County will be using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to manage the project with sophisticated computer programs. The end result will be both a frozen-in-time copyrighted report and a continuously updated database. The effort, originally begun by retired preservation officer Jane Davidson, is coordinated by the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department with local historic commissions compiling the information.

Following Marshall's presentation, Bob Wise, of Wise Preservation Planning and President of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network (CCHPN), explained the important role the Network plays in advancing current and future preservation initiatives. Originally founded as a clearing house for information on historic preservation, the CCHPN serves the needs of historical commissions and historical organizations.

According to Wise, the impetus for preserving our historical resources is shifting. No longer, he stated, are historic structures being saved just because it is a good thing to do. Instead, historic preservation efforts are becoming more focused on sustainable development and saving entire historical and cultural landscapes in conjunction with open space.

Historic preservation, as Wise stated, has and still does work best at the local level. The future role of the CCHPN and affiliated organizations, according to Wise, should be to demystify the preservation process and explain it better to those that need it.

Members of the audience suggested several new ideas for bolstering preservation efforts. One recurring thought was the need for better tax incentives for renovation and ownership of historic structures. Others called for more power to historical commissions and historical and architectural review boards, which currently serve municipalities in advisory roles.

Dinniman invited those in the room to take the discussion one step further, stating that the key mechanism for creating change is clearly defining what it is needed from Harrisburg. "You have the power as historical advocates" he said. This, the power to proactively preserve our past, was clearly the overarching theme of the evening.



West Chester resident Rob Lukens is executive director of Historic Yellow Springs in Chester Springs. He may be contacted at rlukens@yellowsprings.org. His "History" column appears on an occasional basis.

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Inside this issue:

Demolition is Forever *Matthew E. Roberson*

Workshop Speakers In Their Own Words
*Terry Woodman, Sandra S. Momyer,
Glenn R. Diehl, Esq.*

Making History Accessible... One Community At A Time

Jane Pollini

Historical Resources Showcased at Recent Forum

Rob Lukens

For Technical Information on Historic Preservation and Contacts to help you with your historic house or with your preservation efforts, please visit:

www.CCHPN.org



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610.408.8982

Located in Chester County

Matthew E. Roberson

Restoration Carpenter/CCHPN Board Member

610 620 4656

mroberson@gmail.com

***Period-Accurate Carpentry
For Historic Structures***

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P.O. Box 174

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PLEASE FORWARD

Please come and join us for our

Spring 2008 Workshop

**Demolition:
Will the Walls Come
Tumbling Down???**

Come and Join Us!

March 8, 2008

Brandywine River Museum
Chadds Ford
Details Inside!